



P.O. Box 66540
Albuquerque, NM 87193
505.890.6806
E-mail: lrn@liferesource.org
Website: www.liferesource.org

Presentation Transcript
Proving the Sabbath
By Bill Jacobs
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Bill here for LifeResource Ministries.

Today we're talking about why I observe the seventh day of the week, although I'm not a Jew and am a Christian.

When I was somewhere between five and eight years old, I had somehow learned that, in the Ten Commandments, it tells us to worship God on the seventh day of the week. I can't recall now how I learned that, but when I asked my parents about it, they told me that the Jews observed the seventh day and so did the Seventh-Day Adventists, who were Christians. To my young mind, it seemed to me that, if it was in the Bible, then we jolly-well ought to do it. I learned later that it was a bit more involved than that, but not much more. When I asked why we *didn't* keep it, they had no answer for me that I can recall. I've wondered about that ever since. Did they not *know* why? Or was their answer so abstract or complex that it wouldn't stick in my very young and concrete mind. Whichever, that was my introduction to the conflict between modern Christianity and the Bible on the issue of the Sabbath – the seventh day of the week. I filed it away for later investigation and didn't get back to it until I was seventeen years old, which is probably a good thing. I was probably more equipped to handle it at that time.

How did it change? How is it that the entire Christian world now observes Sunday, when they began keeping Saturday? Have you ever wondered about that? In Genesis – right in the beginning – thirty-five hundred years before the Ten Commandments were given to Moses, in the Garden of Eden, God tells us that He sanctified that day of the week and set it apart for us to rest and worship Him. Let's read that – just so it's out there on the screen for you. Genesis 2, verses 1 through 3.

Genesis 2:1-3 – *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work*

that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it, God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.

So there it is. Fifteen hundred years *after* Moses, we see Jesus observing the Sabbath. And following Him, we see the twelve apostles observing it, too. Would you like to see evidence of that? Let's look at a place in the Bible where Jesus gives us a lesson on how to keep the Sabbath – Matthew 12, beginning in verse 1.

Matthew 12:1 – *At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and they began to pluck heads of grain to eat. Today we call that stealing, but back then, that was a part of their culture. Motels and quick food weren't that handy, so farmers left stuff in their fields and people would eat it as needed, and that was okay. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."* Now here would have been an excellent place for Jesus to say, "Don't you people know you don't have to keep the Sabbath any longer? It's the New Testament now." But He didn't. Instead, He takes them to task for the way they kept it. That's interesting, isn't it? And what way was that? Well, they were very strict and legalistic about it. Let's read more – verse :

V-3 – *He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him? How he entered into the house of God and ate the bread of the presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law how, on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And, if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would have not condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath."* Wow! How can you be lord of something that doesn't exist anymore? Do you see what He's saying? "You people presume to tell me how to keep the Sabbath? I made it!" That's what He's saying.

The New Testament church, following Jesus' example, as He told them, observed it at first, too. But then something happened. What was it? How did it get changed? In the New Testament we have the testimony of a number of people, who all knew Jesus personally, giving us evidence of the faith and practice of Jesus and the church at that time. But then, after the apostles died, we can't commonly find anything written down about the issue for at least a hundred years. It's sort of like a curtain comes down on the events following the apostles and the rising again a hundred, or so, years later. When the curtain rises, the church looks nothing like it looked in the days of the first century church. It's kind of mysterious, really.

One of the most glaring differences is the day of worship. The only place I have ever seen any evidence about that time is in a book, called *From Sabbath to Sunset*, by Samuele Bacchiocchi. In his book, Dr. Bacchiocchi tells us how he was allowed to access Catholic

writings that were written after the first century. In those writings, he found evidence about why the day was changed. It had to do with money and power, of course.

After the apostles all died, the early church fathers realized there was tremendous appeal in Jesus Christ, but there was one really big hurdle they had to get over. In Jesus day, the Romans observed Saturday, just like the Jews did. Saturn was the most popular god and his day was Saturday, so everything kind of fit together between Romans and Jews. But after Christ's death, people began to become enthralled with Mithra, the sun god. In the mind of Romans, Saturday began to be associated more and more with those hateful and pesky Jews and less and less with their worship. Persecution began to arise on the Jews more and more, as their religion stood out in contrast to Roman worship. In those days, it was possible to lose your life for observing the seventh day, or to keep the Passover, or for being a Jew. Since Christians practiced somewhat like Jews, the undiscerning Romans persecuted the Christians right along with the Jews.

Interestingly, when the curtain rises after that one hundred years of silence, we see a church observing Sunday and observing a great number of Roman holidays, such as the winter solstice, which is for the sun god. They were distancing themselves from the Jews. Even the Passover – the observance of the death of our Savior – was changed to Easter, which was the birthday of the sun god's mother, Astarte. Her name was pronounced the way we pronounce Easter, by the way. All this was accomplished to protect the church from persecution and popularize it among the Romans. Once these changes were made, what used to be the New Testament church became the Roman Catholic Church. And it began to grow like wild fire. Money poured into the coffers at an incredible rate.

After the Roman Catholic Church was entrenched in Europe, it murdered millions of people who clung to the Sabbath, the true biblical holy days, and who refused to observe the birthdays of pagan gods decked out in Christian trappings. And that is the sad story of how most Christians today unthinkingly observe the day of the sun god instead of the Sabbath, which was created *by* God on the seventh day of creation, and are drawn away from the true faith and practice of the early church.

But does it even matter? What's important about that? Well, I think it matters and here's why – three reasons:

God can tell us how to worship Him. There are huge portions of the Bible where God gives us specific instructions on how He wants to be worshipped. Most Christians no longer believe this. They think they can determine how to worship God. Not so. And we can prove it. When God speaks, we need to listen. Do you want an example out of thousands? Look at this scripture with me – John 4:24:

John 4:24 – *God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth – must worship Him in spirit and truth. No other way will satisfy God.*

Now let me ask you this question. Is it in the spirit of a loving God, or truthful to His word, to murder millions of people in the name of Jesus Christ? When large Christian organizations detour from the pure word of God, they become susceptible to evil motives. More people have been murdered over religion than any other cause. And Christianity has certainly done its fair share. When we don't do what God tells us to do in worship, our Christianity goes right out the window. And that's why I think it's important to follow every last instruction of God.

But can't we do things to honor Him out of our heart? Well yes, as long as they don't contradict what He's already said. God tells us to pray and worship Him. When you pray, nobody prays just like you do. Your prayer is unique every time you pray. And that's fine. But it's not okay to observe sun god's birthday and call it the birth of Christ, nor is it godly to worship God on a day He didn't set aside for that purpose. God has spoken on these issues.

Let's look at another one. Let's look in Jeremiah 10:1.

Jeremiah 10:1 – *Hear the word that the LORD speaks to you. Are you ready for that? Thus says the LORD, “Learn not the way the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of heaven because the nations are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vanity.”*

Here, God is telling ancient Israel to *avoid the religious practices of the nations around them*, because their gods are not really gods at all. There is only One and they already worship Him. By the way, that word *vanity*, do you know what a more appropriate word would be for that? *Vapor, futility*. It's foolish to worship a god that isn't really god at all.

Let's read more. Now He's going to give an example of religious futility – verse 3 of Jeremiah 10.

V-3 – *“...a tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an ax by the hands of a craftsman. They decorate it with silver and gold. They fasten it with hammer and nail so that it cannot move. Their idols are like scarecrows in the cucumber field....”* Do you get the picture of that? Cucumbers grow low – you know, they're a vine that spreads across the ground – and a scarecrow stands straight up – they just stand out! *“...and they cannot speak. They have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil and neither is it in them to do good.”* Nothing more foolish to worship a god that is what it is – as a spindly pine tree cut down and stood upright. Do you do that? I used to, but I gave it up for something better.

Okay, that's the second reason. The first was the God can tell us how to worship. And the second one is an example of what we are *not* to do – that most of us do anyway.

Here's the third reason: *The early church was to be followed*. The scholars in the theological seminaries have done a masterful job of making it easy for us to swallow the ideas of the post-apostolic era. Down through the ages, they have crafted a number of reasons why we don't have to do what God says.

Do you know what the first recorded argument for not observing the seventh day is? Let's read Malachi 4:2.

Malachi 4:2 – *For you, who fear My name, the Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.*

So this is a prophecy of Jesus Christ's second coming. He's called the Sun of righteousness – a new day dawning, so to speak. So it figures that He is the sun god, right? So we should worship Him on that day, right? See how that argument would have appealed to Roman converts? Of course, it means nothing to us today, so that argument is now out the window. You never hear about it. As time passed, and people were no longer biased toward the sun god and sun worship, it's too easy to see through that argument.

The current argument that people are biased toward today – in this post-modern era of no anchors or concrete values – is this: “Now that we have the Holy Spirit, *every* day is holy to us. We don't keep any day. We keep them all in our hearts, even when we're playing golf or working. So it's okay to do anything that we want – Sunday, Saturday, even Monday – it's all the same. We're now free from the oppression of God's law!” It kind of reminds me of that old gambler, you know, that had the three half walnut shells with a dried pea under one of them, and he shuffles it around, and you have to guess where it is. That's kind of like the way these arguments go.

You know, if God actually said that – that it was okay, because we have the Holy Spirit – then it would be okay. But He *hasn't* said that. So that argument is just as empty as the sun god gimmick.

Another argument they put forth is not so much an argument, but a subtle slur – the idea that the early church is a primitive church. If you read Bible commentaries long enough, you'll come up with that phrase, *primitive church*. If you've got one online, just Google it within the index and you'll find it.

If it's primitive, then it's not as refined – sophisticated, advanced – right? You know, if we go to Williamsburg, or some other early settlement, and we see that they had no electricity or plumbing, then we say, “They're primitive.” But was the early church primitive or unsophisticated spiritually? Were they in need of advancement and change to meet the changing spiritual needs of an ever changing world? Well, let's look at what Jesus said – Jude :3 and 4:

Jude 1:3-4 – *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write, appealing to you, to contend for the faith that was once, for all, delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were designated for this condemnation – ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Does that sound to you like Jesus, who inspired these verses, thinks the church would become better over time – that it needed to evolve or become more spiritually sophisticated? Or does it sound like He's warning us that the church would tend to *devolve* – lose sight of the original truth and water down, or drop, the teachings of Jesus – that He originally brought in perfect form? In the face of potential perversion of the grace of our God, hold fast to the original model, delivered perfectly and in need of no change ever by any man or any group of men at any time.

Would you like to see more? Well, here is the apostle Paul issuing the same warning. It's in Hebrew 2, starting in verse 1.

Hebrews 2:1 – *Therefore we must pay must closer attention to what we've heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message, declared by angels, proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to by us who heard it, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to His will.*

So many Christians today have been played like a concerto. And we like it that way. We aren't going to change in the face of a Bible full of evidence. We're going to go along like sheep to the slaughter. Do you know how sheep move about? They tightly focus and follow the backside of the sheep in front of them. If we really want to draw close to God, we need to stop blindly following, and turn on our brains, and read the Book. We need to think.

Let's talk about one more related issue. It's the law. Let's look at it in Exodus 20:8. This is one of the Ten Commandments – the fourth one – the fourth one of four about how to express love to God.

Exodus 20:8 – *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*

When people read this, they say, "That's the *Old* Testament. We're New Testament Christians. We don't have to keep that old law of Moses." Are you sure? Who told you? Where can you read that in the Bible? Let's look at what Jesus said – Matthew 5, verse 17.

Matthew 5:17 – *Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. Do you think that? I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, "Until*

heaven and earth pass away” – has that happened yet? – “*not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished.*” Has all been accomplished yet? No. *Therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so, the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* Which would you rather be called?

What does that word *fulfilled* mean? Some say it means *to finish*. That would mean Jesus said, “I didn’t come to abolish the law. I came to abolish it.” That wouldn’t make sense. It means *to complete* or *fill to the full*. It means that He came to live it completely – fully. Instead of doing away with the law, He came to live a perfect example of how to obey it – an example that we’re supposed to follow today.

This is confusing to some people, because they haven’t thought much about it. The law of Moses contained the core law of God. There is a core law of God. It’s love God and love man. That was in effect from the beginning. The way God expressed it in the law of Moses was in ten written laws, because you’re talking about legal laws for a nation at that point.

How do I know that’s the core law? Well, I learned about that from reading the Gospels. Jesus had an argument with a teacher of the law and they discussed what the law really was about. It was about loving God and loving man. After Jesus came, God was no longer working with a single nation, but in any person who would come to Him. For that reason, some of the national and temple laws have been set aside until God begins working with us as a nation once again. But the core that has always been in effect since Adam and Eve is still there. Let’s read about it – Hebrew 9:9 through 10:

Hebrews 9:9-10 - ...*(which is symbolic for this present age)* – we’re breaking into the middle here. *According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshipper, but deal only with food and drink.* From the context, then, we’re talking about offerings – food and drink offerings – *and various washings and regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.* The only things Christians don’t do today have to do with sacrifices and the national laws of Israel – that is, regulations about how to run a country. The core law of God is still in effect.

In 1 John 4, we’re told that sin is the transgression of the law. So anytime you see a sin mentioned in the Bible, rest assured that there is still a law in effect to be violated. What Jesus did was to *amplify* the application of the law to include a person’s intent. For example, He said, in effect, “It’s no longer good enough to keep from committing adultery or fornication. We have to refrain from even thinking about it, as well.” What does that sound like to you? Does it sound like the law is done away? Or does it sound like it’s even more in force than before?

Okay, if you can see that, then the problem for the church is in justifying no longer doing what God tells us to do – to justify removing one of the Ten Commandments, which is the

Sabbath. If you've read along until now, I hope you can see how completely impossible that notion is. Jesus kept it. The apostles kept it. The early church kept it. When Christ returns, everybody is going to keep it.

We modern-day Christians, we like to talk about walking the walk. Well, what walk is that? It's the same walk Jesus walked. And we're to follow His example. So we ought to be keeping the law the way He kept it.

Let's close with a scripture. The apostle Paul, in his warning about spiritual indolence to the entire New Testament church, comes right out and says it. He was talking about the things that happened in the days of Moses and how they're all a metaphor for New Testament things. He calls going to the Promised Land – which is a type of God's salvation for us – a Sabbath rest. Did you know that the Sabbath pictures – every week – a reminder that one day we will be in God's eternal family, where we will have rest from the cares of this life and this world? Let's read the scripture. It's in Hebrews 4:9 and 10.

Hebrews 4:9-10 – *So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. Did you get that? So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his work, as God did from His.* Isn't that interesting? There's the metaphor and there is the command.

A number of people have tried to convolute that passage to mean that we only have to keep it in our hearts – you know, that's the argument I mentioned earlier – and, of course, we *do* have to keep it in our hearts, but there it is – we must also keep it in real time at the same time God keeps it.

The message here is, if we want to enter into eternal rest, then once a week, on the seventh day, we will rest from our labor, just like God did. Will you do that?

Well, that's it for today. Check back in two weeks to see how one might observe the Sabbath in the modern world. In the meantime, check out more videos on our YouTube channel or our Website or our Facebook page.