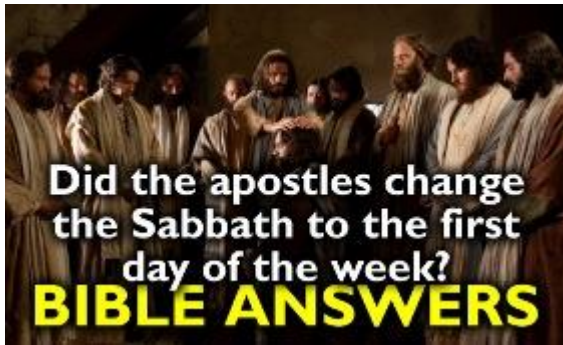


BIBLE ANSWERS - DID THE APOSTLES CHANGE THE SABBATH TO SUNDAY, THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK?



Is there any evidence to the claim that the apostles stopped keeping the 7th day Sabbath, our Saturday, and started worshipping on and keeping the 1st day of the week, our Sunday? There are a number of Bible verses in the New Testament which Sunday keepers use to support this claim and on this page we will deal with all those Bible verses. So let us take a look. There are eight references to the first day of the week in the New Testament and before we begin, a note worthy point to mention is that the name of the day does not change. It remains to be called one of the 'common' days of the week, whereas the 7th day Sabbath continues to be called **the Sabbath day**.

Remember, the books of the New Testament were written **decades** after the resurrection and ascension of Christ and yet the first day is given no special name or significance by the disciples, but the 7th day is **STILL** called the Sabbath day - **decades** after Christ! Jesus Himself even warned **CHRISTIANS**, yes Christians, to pray that their 'escape' from Jerusalem around AD70 would not be on the Sabbath day (Matthew 24:15-20). Jesus was **NOT** speaking to Jews here, He was speaking to the disciples. The Jews did not heed Christ's warning, as they were killed in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army. It was the Christians who heeded Jesus' warning and fled Jerusalem, and it was to them who Christ was speaking!

Now the first two scriptures we want to deal with concerning the first day of the week are those in connection with the apostle Paul. These couple of scriptures seem to be the "weightier" ones Sunday keepers use to support their theory that the apostles changed the Sabbath to Sunday. So let's take a look to see if there is actually any 'weight' behind them at all:

VERSE USED BY SUNDAY KEEPERS - Acts 20:7-11 ... '*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. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.***'

VERSE USED BY SUNDAY KEEPERS - *1 Corinthians 16:1-2 ...'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. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.'*

You will notice I have included the context in the above verses and I have done this for a very good reason. We cannot just extract a few words from the Bible and build a doctrine on them. We must use the context to truly understand what is being said. So let us deal with Acts 20 first. Now you will notice that the verses mention there are **lights** on in the upper room and that Paul continued to preach **until midnight**. So when exactly did this meeting take place? Well, what was God's way and the Jewish way of beginning a day? AT EVENING when the sun has set:

*Mark 1:32 ...'And **at even, when the sun did set**, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.'*

*Leviticus 23:32 ...'It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, **from even unto even**, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.'*

*Genesis 1 ...'And the **evening and the morning** were the first day ... And the **evening and the morning** were the second day.'*

As you can see, according to scripture, a day begins at sundown in the evening, and what does it say above in Acts 20? That the disciples came together when it was **evening**, as it says there were "**many lights**" in the room where Paul preached to them, and the preaching continued until **midnight**. So this tells us that the meeting in Acts 20 took place on what we would call Saturday evening, as sundown Saturday would be 'upon the first day of the week.' Then after the event of the boy falling and being raised to life again, Paul preached "*until break of day*", which would have been approaching the rising of the sun on Sunday morning. Then what did Paul do **DURING 'SUNDAY'**? He went on a journey on foot and then by boat to Assos (Acts 20:13). So what was the purpose of the meeting on "Saturday evening"? Because Paul was leaving on a journey elsewhere during Sunday! Does that sound like any special significance to the first day of the week? Not one bit.

Now some will say that the preaching was until midnight Sunday evening. Well, if that is the case, the disciples gathered 'Sunday evening', which means the preaching of Paul was on the **SECOND** day of the week, because sundown on Sunday in Bible time would be regarded as beginning the second day of the week. Then the record would have stated that they gathered 'upon the **SECOND** day of the week.' Either way, there is no significance to the first day in these verses, and the meeting merely took place during 'Saturday evening' due to Paul travelling the next day - first day of the week.

So what about the "*collection for the saints*" upon the first day of the week recorded in 1 Corinthians 16 above? Sunday keepers believe that Paul is telling the church to take up a collection during church gatherings on the first day of the week. But is this what the verses are saying? No, not at all. Let us carefully look at the phrase ... "*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you **lay by him in store**, as God hath prospered him.*" The key words here are "*lay by him in store.*" The word 'him' means **HIMSELF**, in other words, "*lay up BY*

YOURSELF." What Paul is actually asking is for the saints to gather up **by themselves at home** any means that they can give to the poor in Jerusalem:

"The whole question turns upon the meaning of the expression, 'by him,': and I marvel greatly how you can imagine that it means 'in the collection-box of the congregation.' Greenfield, in his Lexicon, translates the Greek term, 'by one's self, i.e., at home.' ... Three French translations, those of Martin, Osterwald, and De Sacy, 'chez soi,' at his own house, at home. The German of Luther, 'bei sich selbst,' by himself, at home. The Dutch, 'by hemselfen,' same as the German. The Italian of Diodati, 'appresso di se,' in his own presence, at home. The Spanish of Felipe Scio, 'en su casa,' in his own house. The Portuguese of Ferreira, 'para isso,' with himself; The Swedish, 'nar sig sjelf,' near himself. I know not how much this list of authorities might be swelled, for I have not examined one translation that differs from those quoted above." (The American Sentinel, March 10, 1892, p.75)

In light of this, it is positive that no reference is being made here to weekly meetings on the first day of the week, but rather that Paul simply asks that an accounting be done upon the first day of the week **by themselves at home** to lay aside any provision they can give to the poor in Jerusalem. And Paul probably asks for this to be done on the first day of the week because he doesn't want them to do it on the 7th day Sabbath.

This about this - The Jewish leaders had spies all over the place keeping an eye on Paul. So don't you think the Pharisees would have been in uproar over Paul or any other apostles changing the Sabbath to the first day? And yet in Acts 23:9, when Paul is standing before the Jewish leaders, they proclaim ... *"We find no evil in this man."* Think about it!

Isn't it also interesting that Sunday advocates ignore the fact that Paul kept the 7th day Sabbath (Acts 16:13) and preached **every Sabbath to Jews AND Greeks** for a year and a half in Corinth (Acts 18:4,11). Not to mention the whole city in Antioch which came to hear Paul preach on the Sabbath (Acts 13:42-44). These are ignored, while grossly misunderstood verses concerning the first day of the week are clung to!

VERSE USED BY SUNDAY KEEPERS - *John 20:19 ... '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.'*

So here we have another verse used by Sunday keepers to support their 'Sabbath change', and yet again, if we read the context and compare scripture with scripture, we will see that this places no special significance upon the first day of the week. First of all, let us compile a proper order of events and timings here. John 20:1 says that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb of Jesus *"on the first day of the week ... when it was yet dark."* So Mary came to the tomb BEFORE sunrise early on 'Sunday' morning, and Jesus had **ALREADY RISEN**. Keep that in your mind. Then Peter and the 'other disciple' went to the tomb after Mary had told them it was empty (John 20:2-9). Then in verse 10 of John 20, we are told that the disciples go **back to their own homes**. This will be 'Sunday' morning. After Jesus appears to Mary (John 20:11-18), we are told that the disciples 'assemble together' when? *"The same day AT EVENING."* Why? *"for FEAR OF THE JEWS."* (John 20:19).

They came together at **'evening' when the first day was coming to an end**, and the REASON they came together was NOT for 'church worship', but because they **feared the Jews**. And why did Jesus appear to them at that time? Read Mark 16:14 ..

*Mark 16:14 ...'Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and **upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.**'*

Why did Jesus appear to the disciples then? Was it because Sunday was the 'new' Sabbath worship time? No! It was because the disciples, as John 20 confirmed, were **'afraid of the Jews'** and as the above in Mark 16 confirms, they **did not believe the report of Jesus' resurrection**. So Jesus appeared to them to show Himself and comfort them in their distress and unbelief. Do you see when you look into the details that there is no special significance attached to the first day of the week? The disciples were in their OWN HOMES during the day according to John 20:10 and were not assembled together until 'evening', when the first day was coming to an end. How is that any proof of the disciples changing the Sabbath to Sunday? It's none at all! We are even told in Luke 23:56 that they **KEPT the Sabbath according to the commandment**. But these verses are ignored by Sunday advocates.

Think about it. These scriptures were written by the very disciples whom Sunday keepers believe changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and yet the very scriptures which the disciples wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, **decades after** the resurrection, do not speak a word of a change in the Sabbath. In fact, they continue to call the 7th day 'THE Sabbath.' They do not start calling the 7th day 'the JEWISH Sabbath', or the first day of the week 'the Christian Sabbath', NO, these **Christians** continue to call the 7th day THE Sabbath day and the first day, 'the first day of the week.' How anyone can see a change in the Sabbath in that is beyond me! So let us look at the remaining verses to do with the first day of the week. These are connected with the resurrection as follows:

*Matthew 28:1 ...'In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward **the first day of the week**, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.'*

*Mark 16:2 ...'And **very early in the morning the first day of the week**, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.'*

*Luke 23:55 - 24:1 ...'And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and **rested the sabbath day according to the commandment**. 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.'*

*John 20:1 ...'The **first day of the week** cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.'*

What is the first thing to notice about these verses? Mary came to the tomb while it was yet dark before sunrise, very early on the first day of the week, and what did she find? **An empty tomb**. So Jesus had already risen BEFORE sunrise. This means Jesus could have risen anytime after Sabbath had ended at sundown Saturday evening and before sunrise Sunday morning. Hence there is NO proof regarding a connection between the resurrection and

Sunday being chosen as a new special holy day. The fact that Jesus 'rested' in death in the tomb **during the 7th day Sabbath** gives more credence to the 7th day than the 1st.

What was the reason the women went to the tomb early on the first day of the week? Why didn't they go on the 7th day? Because they were "**resting THE SABBATH DAY according to the commandment**" (Luke 23). This account was written by Luke under inspiration of the Holy Spirit and what does he confirm? That the first day of the week is now the new holy day for Christians? No. He confirms that the followers of Jesus continued to keep the 7th day Sabbath holy, as per the 4th commandment. So these accounts actually go against Sunday keepers, not for them! Remember, the scriptures were written decades after the resurrection when the disciples are supposedly now keeping Sunday as the Sabbath, and yet **not one word** is spoken in support of this. Not one word! So as you can see, when we look at the actual details of these things, we see that the disciples never changed the Sabbath to Sunday and neither did God place any special significance upon the first day of the week. The 7th day Sabbath is **STILL** the Sabbath of the Lord our God and the first day of the week is **STILL** the first day of the week.

Pope John Paul II got it right when he said ... *"This is why Christians, called as they are to proclaim the liberation won by the blood of Christ, **FELT** that they had the authority to transfer the meaning of the Sabbath to the day of the Resurrection."* (John Paul II, *DIES DOMINI*, 1998, pgr.63 - [source](#)) That's about the sum of it! Pure assumption on the part of Sunday keepers, nothing more!

Jesus never said He is Lord of the first day of the week. He said He is Lord of the Sabbath day (Mark 2:28; Matt.12:8). The Lord's day therefore is NOT Sunday, it is the 7th day Sabbath - our Saturday, just as God confirmed - "*My holy day*" (Isaiah 58:13).