

A Night with the Lions

For the first time the design of the counsellors flashed across the mind of Darius. A decree signed with the king's seal was unalterable in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, yet the king spent the entire day pleading with those in high authority, and searching for some way of escape; but with Satanic smiles those princes met every argument with the words, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That nor decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed."

When the hands of men are tied; when there is no power on earth to help; then is God's opportunity. And Daniel's prayer still ascended: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work. Keep me in perfect harmony with thee." And while his own heart was in sympathy with heaven, there was no power on earth which could deprive him of his life, if God desired him to live.

Daniel and Darius met at the mouth of the lions' den, but there was not another man in the realm so fitted to go inside as this same Daniel. Pressing the hand of his esteemed minister, Darius said, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." Daniel passed into the midst of the wild beasts of the forest, and a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den. Probably some feared that friends and sympathizers of Daniel might come to the rescue, so the seal of the king was placed upon the stone, that the purpose might not be changed.

Satan exulted as he did years later when he saw the Son of God in the sepulchre, with a stone before the door, and the stone sealed with the Roman seal. But there was no more power to hold Daniel in the den of lions than to keep Christ in the grave. The angel came, not to the stone, but into the den, and one of the most precious times for Daniel was when he sat in the centre of the cave, and those lions couched at his feet or fondly licked his hands.

There was a time when the lion and the lamb played together, and man was given dominion over the beasts of the earth. It was only after sin entered, and man took the life of the beasts, that they in turn sought to destroy man. Harmony with God will finally restore man to his God-given place as king of the beasts. Daniel's heart was beating with the heart of God, and when he entered the den, the beasts were at peace with him. The unity of feeling is shown in the fact that an angel was visible, and Daniel talked face to face with the heavenly visitor.

The king's heart was sad, and he spent the night in fasting and prayer. Hastening to the den in the early hours of the morning, he called: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" And from the recesses of the den came the words of cheer, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths."

"He is not here, but risen." "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" said the angel, as the women came to the sepulchre of Christ. So no manner of hurt was found upon Daniel, the representative of Christ, "because he believed in his God;" because innocency was found in him.

When Daniel's accusers were cast into the lions' den, they were crushed and devoured at once. Again the nations of the world saw the power of Israel's God to preserve his faithful people. Darius had his belief in God confirmed; and Cyrus had received a lesson he could not soon forget. It was a fresh token to the Israelites that God was in their midst to bless

them. To Daniel came the voice of God promising patience and strength to perform his duties as a servant of God. Greater light came to Daniel, for it was after this experience that a large portion of the prophecies were given to him.

Darius published to “all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth,” “that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.” Thus God not only honoured Daniel by a most miraculous deliverance, but his integrity was the means of publishing the truth throughout the world. From this time Daniel prospered-during the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus, who issued the wonderful decree for the deliverance of the Jews.

If sick at heart because of the seeming prosperity of the wicked and the increase of wickedness among men in high places, learn their fate from the sixth chapter of Daniel.

If oppressed because of adherence to the Word of God, remember that Daniel represents all such, and what was done for him will be done for all whom Heaven favours to-day. Though death claim the body, the promise of God is a speedy resurrection; and whether in death, in prison, or the den of lions, Satan has no power over Christ. “I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.”

In Daniel chapter 6 we saw what happened to Daniel when he continued to be faithful to God. He was thrown into a den of lions, yet God sent His angels to shut the lion’s mouths and protect Daniel. Daniel was not willing to put the king above God. We saw that God and His law are eternal and unchangeable.

His law exemplifies His character, and like a mirror, it shows us where we are out of harmony with Him. Most people keep at least eight of the commandments, but John, in the book of Revelation, pictures God’s last day people, “That keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” As we looked at the principles of God’s law we learned that the first four commandments focus on our relationship with God, while the last six focus on our relationship with each other. We agreed that we couldn’t do away with any of them if we wanted to have complete peace and harmony with God and each other. Let’s just review the principles of God’s Law:

Relationship with God Relationship with Mankind

1. Loyalty, 2. True Worship, 3. Reverence, 4. Holy Time, 5. Respect for Authority (Parental, Civil, and Spiritual), 6. Respect for Life, 7. Purity of Heart, 8. Honesty, 9. Truthfulness, 10. Contentment

Christians today believe in most of these principles; therefore, in this study we would like to focus on the one commandment that most of the world either forgets or doesn’t think matters, and that’s the fourth commandment. This commandment deals with the principle of “Holy Time,” a divine appointment for each of us, every week. Only a Holy God can make Time Holy. So let’s see how the Bible describes “Holy Time” starting from the beginning of time. Genesis 2:1-3

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Did you see that, after the crowning act of creation, God created a day of rest? A day He blessed and sanctified (that means to make Holy). God now set apart the seventh day of the week for Adam and Eve to worship Him and come apart from their daily routine. Even before sin entered this world, God had given them the Sabbath. Now some Christians say that the Ten Commandments began on Mount Sinai.

But notice the next two passages of Scripture. Genesis 26:5 “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

More than three hundred years before the commandments were given on Mount Sinai, the Bible says that Abraham “obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. “Let’s now go to another example of how God expected His people to know and keep His commandments, before they were written on tables of stone and given to Moses. God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness. As they crossed the wilderness, God supplied their every need. Giving them water to drink and a portion of daily bread.

Exodus 16:4-5

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.”

Notice that the 10 Commandments haven’t been written on two tables of stone yet! The commandments come in Exodus chapter 20. Yet, God is going to call His people into accountability. To be loyal and to keep of the Seventh day Sabbath. God knew that the Israelites had been taught to keep the commandments, yet, after 400 years of bondage in Egypt, they needed to be reminded of the importance of keeping all of them. You see, the 10 Commandments didn’t start at Mount Sinai, but have been part of God’s character and government in heaven for ever. The war that started in heaven, and was brought to this earth, was all over Satan’s decision, to not keep God’s law. Now, after bringing Israel out of Egypt, and into the wilderness, God began to help them again see the holiness of the Seventh day Sabbath. He desired to build a solid, loving, relationship with them on the day He set aside, as “Holy Time.” The sixth day of the week became known as the “Preparation Day,” a day to prepare for the Seventh day Sabbath.

Exodus 16:15

“And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they whilst not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.”

Exodus 16:25-30

“And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a Sabbath unto the LORD: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the LORD hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.”

The Lord gives them the bread of two days on the sixth day, so that they may prepare ahead for the Sabbath. On the Seventh day there is none in the field. God wanted them to learn to prepare ahead for the Sabbath, so that the Sabbath could be spent with Him! Yet as usual, some didn't believe and went out on the Sabbath to gather food and didn't find any. The Lord then said to Moses, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" Which commandments? The Ten Commandments had not been written on tables of stone yet! Could God expect them to honor something that they didn't know about? NO! God gave His law to Adam and Eve and they passed it down through the generations.

That is how Abraham, not only knew about the commandments, but kept them! Let's turn our attention to Exodus chapter 20. We have already gone through the 10 Commandments; but, this time, I want to focus on the fourth commandment. Most of the Christian world believes in most of the Commandments; but, they want to forget the one Commandment God said to remember—the Commandment of "Holy Time."

Exodus 20:8-11

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

The one day, God says to remember, most of the world forgets! God says we can do our own work, the other six days, but the Seventh-day Sabbath is His day—The Lord's Day! Yet, you have some today that say, "That was for the Jews!" Let me ask you, was "Thou shalt not commit adultery" only for the Jews? How about "Thou shalt not steal," was that only for the Jews? Of course not, but either we except the whole law or none of it! We can't pick and choose. As a person once said, "The Ten Commandments are not multiple choice!"

Deuteronomy 5:29

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

Here the Lord asks us to "Fear Him." The word "Fear" here doesn't mean to be afraid of Him, but rather to respect and reverence Him, to be loyal to Him. He also asks for us to "keep all my commandments always," God didn't change His mind, after all in Ecclesiastes 3:14, Solomon tells us that, "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him." Once again we see that God is asking for our allegiance and loyalty, and tells us that He doesn't change! Which means what He establishes is right for everyone! Now let's turn our attention to Jesus, as our example, to see what day He worshipped on.

Luke 4:16 "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." The Bible says, "His custom was," to go to the synagogue or church on the "Sabbath day," A custom is something that you do out of habit, or regularly. This text is clear the Jesus made a practice of going to church on the Seventh day Sabbath. Now, do you think that Jesus

went to church on the Sabbath to be saved? No, it was the will of His Father in Heaven that, as our example, He would keep the whole law.

Jesus tells us in John 14:15, "If you love me, keep my commandments." Because of our love for God we will respond the same way. You might ask, "How can we really know which day the Sabbath is?" That is a good question. Once again, let us go to the Scriptures to discover the answer.

Luke 23:54 - 24:3

"And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. 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. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus."

Notice the sequence:

Preparation Day	6th day of the week	Friday
Sabbath	7th day of the week	Saturday
First Day	1st day of the week	Sunday

Now all of Christianity knows that Jesus rose on the first day of the week, or Sunday as we know it today. We also know from Exodus chapter 16 that the "Preparation day" was on the sixth day, which is the day Jesus died. Our calendar today points to this day as "Good Friday," because of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. This passage of Scripture points out that the Sabbath, is the day between Friday and Sunday, and that would be Saturday! Therefore, the Bible is clear, we can know which day the Sabbath is on, Saturday. This is why the priests were anxious to get Jesus off the cross before sundown, because the Sabbath started at sunset on Friday and went until sundown on Saturday. Twenty-four hours that God has declared is holy!

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 1:5 "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Key Point:

1. The Sabbath is not just the hour or two you spend at church! It is a complete twenty-four hours, starting at sunset and ending at sunset the next day.

At creation, God established two parts to a day, dark (night time) and light (day time). God said the evening (night time) and the morning (day time), were each day. This helps us to understand how God recognizes time. Evening begins at sunset and then, 24 hours later, the day ends at sunset. So sunset starts and ends a day. That's what Luke 23:54 says, "That day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." It was late in the afternoon, when they took the body of Jesus off the cross, and took Him to the tomb. By the time the women got back home it was about sunset. They kept the Sabbath and then went back early Sunday morning. Therefore, we see that the Sabbath actually starts at sundown on

Friday night and continues until sundown on Saturday night.

Key Points:

1. In 140 languages of the world, the word for the seventh day of the week is “Sabbath.”
2. Webster’s Dictionary has these definitions:

Saturday: “The 7th day of the week”

Sunday: “The 1st day of the week”

Now, you might say, I understand that in the Old Testament God’s people worshipped on the Seventh day Sabbath, but, today, we worship on the first day in honor of His resurrection, the Christians “Lord’s Day.” The first question I would have to ask is, “Where in the Bible do we find a command to worship on the first day of the week in honor of His resurrection?” You might say, well John was in the “Spirit on the Lord’s Day.”

Revelation 1:10

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,”

Keys Points:

There are two things we need to look at here.

1. Does this text, alone, tell us which day of the week the Lord’s Day is? NO!
2. Does it tell us He has a day? YES! So, let’s take a look at what the Bible says, is the Lord’s Day!

Mark 2:27-28

“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.”

Here Jesus points us back to the creation week, that ended with the Sabbath (seventh day) created for man to always remember Him as their Creator God. Therefore, the Sabbath is not only a memorial of Creation, but points us to our Creator, Lord and Saviour- Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

In the heart of God’s Law we find the fourth commandment. God tells us that six days are for doing the work that we need to do, but the “Seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God:” Here we find the Lord Himself says that the Seventh day (Saturday as we know it) is the Lord’s Day! Then He gives us the reason we should keep it. “For in six days the LORD made (Created) heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” He once

again brings us back to Creation, with Him as the Creator, as the reason to keep the Sabbath.

Some will tell you that Sabbath isn't mentioned in the New Testament so you don't have to keep it! But, stop and think for a moment. If Jesus had changed the day of worship, from the Seventh day Sabbath (Saturday) to the First day of the week (Sunday), after four thousand years of keeping the Sabbath, don't you think it would have been the biggest news of the New Testament? Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul were all Sabbath keepers! This would have been the most important topic! Yet you don't hear a lot about it, because it wasn't changed and everyone was expected to keep it. Next we want to consider a passage in Hebrews where the Apostle Paul is warning other to keep the Sabbath.

Hebrews 4:10-11

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

The Apostle Paul says that we should stop our own works, just like God did His. He is pointing us back to Creation, the Sabbath that God gave to all mankind, starting with Adam and Eve. He then shares the example of the children of Israel when in the wilderness went out to collect Manna on the Sabbath and there wasn't any. Paul says, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Notice he said, "That" rest! Not just any day you choose, but the day God chose, the Seventh Day Sabbath (Saturday). God made a special day, in which He blessed and sanctified, or made it holy, just for us. He wants to spend the Sabbath with us, building a close relationship and showing us His plan for our lives.

Let's quickly review two important points:

1. The fourth Commandment says "the seventh-day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."
2. Therefore, the Seventh-day Sabbath is the Lord's Day.

You might say, "But didn't Jesus or the disciples change the day of worship from the seventh day to the first? Jesus tells us in John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments." He is calling for His people to keep all of His commandments forever!

As Jesus was looking almost 40 years into the future when Jerusalem would be destroyed, warns us in Matthew 24:20, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day."

Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., almost 40 years after Jesus died on the cross! If Jesus was going to change the day of worship why did He bother telling His disciples to pray their flight wouldn't be on the Sabbath day? The answer is simple, He wouldn't!

The book of Acts, tells us that after His resurrection Jesus spent the next 40 days with His disciples.

That would have covered five weekends, and would have given Him opportunity to share about a change in the day of worship, yet we don't read that anywhere, because Jesus didn't change the day of worship! Now let's see what day the Apostle Paul worshipped on.

Acts 13:14-15

“But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”

Key Points:

1. Fifteen years after Jesus went back to heaven, Paul was still going to church on the Sabbath.
2. He wasn't there to preach, he was there to worship.
3. It wasn't until the leaders asked him, saying, “If ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on,” that he stood up and talked.

Some will say that Paul only went to church on the Sabbath to reach just the Jews, but the Scriptures tell us differently.

Acts 13:42-44

“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.”

Key Points:

1. Paul was given as an evangelist to the Gentiles first.
2. When Paul was leaving church the Gentiles asked “That these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.” Why didn't the Gentiles ask Paul to preach to them the next day, the first day of the week? Because they knew Paul went to church on the Sabbath!
3. “The next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.” Jews and Gentiles came together to worship on the seventh day Sabbath.

Acts 17:2 “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,”

Twenty years after Christ was crucified, resurrected and went back to heaven, “Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.”

Acts 18:4 and 11

v. 4 “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.”

v. 11 “And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”

Key Points:

1. Paul “Persuaded the Jews and the Greeks” “Every Sabbath.”
2. Twenty-five years after Jesus went back to heaven, Paul continued his work, preaching every Sabbath, for one and a half years in the city of Corinth.

Now, let’s look at the everlasting gospel, a message for God’s people living in the end times.

Revelation 14:6-7

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

Keys Points:

1. The last day message given here is not just for the Jews but for everyone in the world.
2. We are to “Fear” (Reverence) God and give Him Glory. We do this through our lifestyle. He is asking us to be loyal to Him in all that we do.
3. The judgment hour is upon us and we are to share that Jesus is standing in judgment of His people. Do our lives give evidence that we are sons and daughters of God? Are we surrendered to His will?
4. Worship Him that “Made.” Another word for made is “Created.” We are to give honor to God and worship Him as the Creator on the memorial that He set up to remind us of Creation, the Seventh-day Sabbath.

That is why John, who wrote the book of Revelation, declares that God’s last day people will be keeping all of God’s commandments including the fourth, the seventh day Sabbath. Revelation 14:12 “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

Revelation 12:17 “which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 22:14 “Blessed are they that do his commandments,”

One of the most exciting things we see about the Sabbath is that it doesn’t end here on this earth! We will be keeping the Sabbath throughout eternity!

Isaiah 66:22-23

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.”

When this earth is destroyed and Jesus makes it over new, the Bible says that “From one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” That means, throughout eternity, every Sabbath we will come together to worship Him as our

Creator God! How exciting! God created the Sabbath to be a blessing to all mankind at creation. He asked His people in the Old Testament times to keep the Sabbath Holy! Jesus kept the Sabbath! The apostles kept the Sabbath! God calls all His people living in the end times to keep it. Now, we see that we will be worshipping Him, on the Sabbath, throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity! God loves us so much that He is longing to spend this day with you, to recreate you and make you more like Him. Since God doesn't change, do you think it would be important for us to keep the seventh day Sabbath, the Lord's Day, holy today?

As you can see, the seventh day Sabbath is from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday night. Even though most of the world worships on a different day, do you want make a decision today to follow Jesus, as your Creator God, worshipping Him on the day He set aside for worship, the seventh day Sabbath?