

What Is the Sabbath – Part 3 – A Changing Attitude

Matthew Vander Els • 2016-03-03 • foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

[Matthew 24](#) • [Acts 18](#) • [Romans 6](#) • [Romans 4](#) • [Deuteronomy 5:13](#) • [Isaiah 64](#) • [Jeremiah 27](#) • [Mark 16:9](#) • [Malachi 4:2](#)

Why We Keep the Sabbath

So the first week, as you remember, we went over why we keep the Shabbat. We keep the Sabbath as a token, as a remembrance, as a sign of the covenant, but it's more than that. It's more than that. We see that Yeshua himself used the Sabbath and paved his entire ministry with the foundation of the Sabbath, looking forward to the sabbatical jubilee—the restoration of all things and the millennial reign which will be likened unto the Sabbath.

And then last week we reviewed the church fathers. We went into a short introduction on patristic writings—early church father writings, if you will. Instructions to early believers. We talked about the Didache, which was an incredible document. We talked about the anonymous epistle known as the first epistle of Clement. And I believe we also spoke about Ignatius. All three of those authors—I don't believe one of them really dives into explaining a transition from a Saturday Sabbath into a Sunday. There are some translations that are debatable. Some translations of the Didache and Ignatius that scholars fight about, but with contemporary scholarship, we now realize that some of the phrases translated as "the Lord's day" really should be "the Lord's life" or "the Lord's way," reflecting His way of doing things.

Then we went over the letters of Barnabas. Again, these are anonymous letters. Remember those? They were kind of—what in the world? He seems like a jerk in the way that he's thinking, and he seems to have some really heretical ideas about the scriptures and the Christian faith. And something that he writes in his letters—attributed to Barnabas, the guy who welcomed Paul into the apostles, the guy who stood up for him—he did not write this set of letters. The writer of these letters shows an attitude changing from us to them, a division beginning to emerge between Jews and Gentile Christians. Barnabas actually writes in his

letters, around the second century A.D., that the Jews were never the people of God. They're not the people of God. They're not the people of any covenant. They were never the people of a covenant. The Christians were always the people of God.

This man was trying to reference a lot of Mishnaic thought and verses from the Tanakh, but he misquoted everything. Took a lot of stuff out of context. We're not sure who wrote this letter, but it gives us an idea of when a turning point was happening in the Christian faith.

Justin Martyr and the Church Fathers

We stopped last week coming upon Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr was born around 100 AD and began writing letters around 135 AD, until I believe he died in 165 AD-ish. It's all circa, if you will. And it's interesting because—well, we can read this again. This is pretty cool. Justin Martyr is a very important writer that we have. We have a lot of documentation from him, and one of his most famous works is his apologies—he was an apologist, if you will. He always wrote what seemed to be a pair of works. He was writing to a Jewish man by the name of Trypho, and they would argue back and forth in these letters.

Now some scholars, if you care, believe that this Jewish man that he was writing to, Trypho, was made up. He was a fictional person of Justin Martyr's imagination. We're not sure. All the same, Justin is voicing his opinion on the Christian faith less than a hundred years after Yeshua had died and resurrected.

Defining Heresy

And he's starting to condemn heresies. A heresy is something interesting because it's something really only Christians can do. See, he didn't call the Jews heretics because they didn't believe in Jesus. He called them unbelievers. A heretic was someone who had biblical knowledge, who claimed to be a Christian, but believed something that was contrary to the Bible blatantly.

And something that is very, very, very, very, very funny—I think it shocked me when I read it—is right here in his Dialogue with Trypho, Chapter 80. He taught against heresy. Where is it? Where is it? "For I choose not to follow men or men's doctrines, but God and the doctrines delivered by him. For if you have fallen in with some of those who are called Christians, but who do not admit this truth and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, who say there is no resurrection of the dead and that their souls when they die are taken to heaven, do not imagine these people are Christians."

I'm not here to debate whether he's right or wrong. I'm just here to point out that this man is an esteemed church father. I found this very interesting. He called this idea of going to heaven when you die heresy.

The Centrality of Resurrection

Because most people who believe that when they die and go to heaven don't really acknowledge a resurrection, which is what the entirety of scripture is all about. The resurrection was one of the biggest purposes, the core function of what Yeshua did. It's what everybody was banking on, right? If Yeshua came and died and there's no resurrection, what's Paul say? Have a good time. You're just going to die anyway. The resurrection was everything. It is all about the resurrection.

I heard one of my mentors say that the resurrection was more important than Yeshua because Yeshua came to fulfill it. If the resurrection is not legitimate, then what does Yeshua matter? And so Justin Martyr is pointing that out. He's saying, listen guys, there ain't no point in believing in you. You're a heretic if you don't believe in the resurrection. You just die and go to heaven. Well, that's great, but that's not in the Bible according to Justin Martyr. It's very interesting.

The Separation of Christianity and Judaism

To Trypho, Justin explains: "We too would observe your circumcisions of the flesh, your Sabbath days, and in a word, all of your festivals, if we were not aware of the reason why they were imposed upon you, mainly because your sins and your hardness of your heart."

We start to see this attitude, and that's what today's content is going to be about—searching throughout history. We know that the first believers were Jewish, and the first set of Gentiles that came into the faith of Yeshua obeyed Torah. They kept the Sabbath. They did these things that were expected of them if they were to claim they were in covenant with God.

But around 100 years later, we start to see an attitude change very distinctly, especially within Justin's writings. He states that the Torah and all the things that the Jews do—we could do them as Christians, but the reason we don't is because the Jews sinned and broke God's covenant. The Sabbath and circumcision were signs against them. Remember the Mark of Cain? If you do these things, it's the mark that you're a disobedient servant to God, and this is the sign to identify you.

In other words, Justin's evidence for showing people that the Sabbath doesn't apply anymore is this: animals are still running around in the wild, and the waterfalls don't stop, and everything in nature doesn't stop on the Sabbath, so why should we? I mean, good argument? Like, what do you say to that? And he himself does not stop controlling the movement of the universe on that day, but he continues directing it then as he does all other days. God is still in control and he's still moving everything around on Saturday. So obviously he's working.

Let me find my notes here. Was this where I was? Yes, this is his accusation to Jews. Now what we're about to read gives us an insight into when a turning point was happening in the Christian faith. We have to figure out why he would write these things. Why would the writer of Barnabas begin to write about these ideas that are all obviously anti-Semitic? Why was Justin Martyr, a man of the faith—right?—a man of the next generation after the disciples. Why was he so intent on separating himself and all believers from the Jews?

What would cause this attitude? Matt, there's no excuse for that. I'm not saying there's an excuse for it. Obviously he did it, and a lot of people after him did it. But the question is, can we find out in history what would prompt people to sit there and say, "You know what? We know we're in covenant with God, but we don't want to be associated with the Jews. So we're going to say everything they do is something that Christians don't have to do so we can separate ourselves."

Oh, it's coming. It's coming. "You have spared no effort in disseminating in every land dark and unjust accusations against the only guiltless and just light sent to men by God." He's talking about Yeshua. "The other nations have not treated Christ and us, his followers, as unjustly." So Justin is putting forth an accusation that everyone else is nice to Christians, the believers in Messiah, but the Jews aren't. They're spreading accusations, cursing them.

The Shemoneh Ezra Hypothesis

There's a hypothesis—a pretty well-based one—because we have multiple writings that speak about how the Jews would curse the Christians daily. And so a hypothesis arose about the Shemoneh Ezra, the Amidah.

The Amidah and the 12th Benediction

Anybody ever heard of the Amidah? I hope so. Please raise your hands. Yes. This is the standing prayer. It's pronounced in Judaism every single day. Many of us in here pray the Amidah every day. What's interesting is these benedictions of the Amidah, they found one in Cairo. The

Berkah HaNamin, it's the 12th benediction, I believe. And it's concerning heretics. If you've ever read the Hamidah, you'll see it. The twelfth benediction of the weekday Amidah. The benediction belongs to the latter part of the Amidah, which beseechs redemption for the people of Israel.

So what's interesting is if you read this portion of the Amidah today, you won't read anything that has any significance to Christians. Right? Blot out the heretics. No big deal. What's interesting is they found in a Siddur prayer book from Cairo, Ganesa. So this discovery in Egypt—they discovered over 300,000 documents that dated back to the 7th and 8th century. Most of them Jewish documents. And they discovered a prayer book in there, a Siddur, that had the Amidah and they noticed something.

In the early Middle Ages, this was written in the Amidah. In the Middle Ages, this was pronounced every day in the Amidah, in Jewish prayers. The hypothesis comes in: we know from the writings of Justin that on a day-to-day basis, the Jews were cursing Christians. Could it be possible that this prayer originated in the first century and was kept until the Middle Ages, until later it was changed? For that, I can't tell you yes or no. We don't know. And anyone who studied this can tell you we don't know. But it's a valid theory that in the first century, we know that Jewish-Christian relations weren't really that great, right?

And we'll go over that a little bit later. The hypothesis is that every day when they came together in the synagogues to pray, they would be able to spot out Jewish brothers and sisters if they were converted or not, if they believed in Yeshua, because they would look around when they got to the 12th benediction and see who was not uttering these words. And then they would be able to identify you. We cannot say that for a fact, but this is a very heavily held theory. We know that in the 7th and 8th century, this was the case, because this is where this document comes from.

Justin and the Daily Curse

Justin confirms the Jewish cursing. The curse that was daily pronounced by Jews in the synagogue against Christians apparently contributed to heightened tension. Justin protested repeatedly against such practice, saying: "To the utmost of your power you dishonor and curse in your synagogues against all who believe in Christ. In your synagogues you curse all those who through them have become Christians and the Gentiles put into effect your curse by killing all those who merely admit that they are Christians." This is a quote from this book.

In other words, you do all in your power to force us to deny Christ—something Justin repeats. This resentment against Jews, especially in Rome, would lead to Christians like Justin to lash out and attack one of the greatest symbols of Hebraic living, the Sabbath, and convert it to what Francis Rigon—he wrote a book, "Dis Dominica," which is the Lord's day, if you will—he says: "They converted the Sabbath into a mark to single out for punishment they so well deserved in their infidelities."

The Burden of the Gentiles

You're a Gentile, and you've just come into the faith of Yeshua. You're new to this. Maybe you weren't even monotheistic before you came into this faith. You proclaim Him. You know the covenants of God and you don't know everything, but you know that through the love of God, he sent his son to die for you and now you're in the covenant. This is awesome. And then you have Jews who are supposed to be your brothers and sisters, betray you by telling you that you're not in covenant, that you need to do all this other stuff first. You need to convert to Judaism. You can't be in covenant with God unless you're an actual Judean and you go through a formal conversion. You know what? Your Messiah is not our king. We curse you. Everywhere you go, we curse you. You can't even go to the synagogues anymore. You're forced to keep Shabbat at your house. You're forced to gather at your homes to worship and pray. How would you feel about this?

I'm not saying it's right, I'm not saying it's wrong, I'm saying this seems to be what history says happened. And we're going to discuss why. The Gentiles coming into the faith, especially the Romans—specifically the Romans—did not have a high appeal for Jews in the first and second and third centuries and fourth, and it got worse.

The Separation Begins

Jews were looked down upon as the scum of the earth. We're going to quote one Roman poet who says that the Jews were actually lepers that were kicked out of Egypt, carrying the filth of all mankind with them. This is how people thought of Judeans in the first, second, and third century. And we love to think that people came into the faith of Messiah and the Jews came and accepted them and people lived and they worshiped in the synagogue side by side, some of them not believing in Yeshua and the others praising Yeshua. That did not happen.

At first, it began to happen, but then both sides began putting wedges between them and separating themselves in identity. We are not Jews, we are not Christians. Cursed be the Jews,

cursed be the Christians. What's most heartbreaking about this scenario is not necessarily that it happened, but how quickly it happened. Not even a hundred years after Yeshua died and rose from the dead did Christians come into the faith saying, "You know what? We believe in Jesus. But we're not Jewish. We don't want to have anything to do with Jewish stuff, anything that has to do with the Torah, none of that. We don't want to have anything to do with that which associates our identity with Judaism, the Judeans. It's heart-wrenching to think that.

Sunday and the First Day

This would lead to distinguishing Christians from Jews. Mark a tab up. Sunday indeed is the day in which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day of the week which God, transforming darkness and prime matter, created the world. And our Savior Jesus Christ arose from the dead on that same day for they crucified him on the day before that of Saturn. And on the day after, which is Sunday, he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them the things which we have passed on to you also for consideration.

So again, Justin's writing back to this Jewish guy, allegedly, and he's explaining why Christians are beginning to keep Sunday. Notice that when he thinks Jesus died—I said this last week, and guys, we need to understand what patristic writings, what history we have, okay? He's saying that Yeshua died the day before the day of Saturn. You guys know what the day of Saturn is? Saturday, and he rose the next day.

The Resurrection Timeline Debate

Every single church father writes that Yeshua died on a Friday and rose on a Sunday. It doesn't add up. But there are reasons for that, I believe. There's multiple times in the New Testament where it talks about him rising on the third day and on the third day instead of after. And so there is a debate. Would he die on Wednesday night and rise on Sunday morning or late Saturday night, whichever? Or was it Friday to Sunday? Both can be argued.

And so when we see stuff like this, we obviously see that in the first and second or the second and third centuries, the debate had been pretty much one that it was Friday to Sunday. It's interesting to note that the primary motivation for the observance of Sunday is not commemorating Yeshua resurrecting, it's commemorating the first day of the week. Notice where he starts. It's the day that God made light, the day when God transformed everything and began his creation in the world. And Yeshua also rose on this day.

Roman History and Claudius

I want to talk about Roman history now. Is that okay? So in Acts chapter 18, we see something very familiar. We've read this story. There he met a Jew named Aquila, native to Pontus, who also recently had come from Italy with his wife Priscilla. Aquila and Priscilla. I don't know. It just sounds cool.

Because the emperor Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome, Paul went to see them. And so what had happened in the first century is the Judean population in Rome began a lot of different protests. And there's varying opinions on these protests, but the Jews got kicked out of Rome for five years. What's interesting is that Christian believers, Aquila and Priscilla, were not distinguished from other Jews that were unbelieving. In other words, no one saw a difference between Christians and Jews at this point in time, according to [Acts 18](#). All Jews get out. Anyone who does this stuff, get out. Not Jews and Christians. Christians were lumped in with Jews at this time in the first century.

I'm kind of going back in time from Justin Martyr. He was a generation later. What happened next is very interesting. In 49 AD, Claudius banned Jews from Rome, and they returned five years later. This is when this event took place in Acts chapter 18, verse 2. So if you have your Bible open, turn to Acts chapter 18 and put 49 AD right beside it. That's cool.

Nero and the Great Fire

What's interesting is after Claudius, a very famous ruler came about in Rome, and his name was Nero, right? And what was he famous for? The witness of God. Do what? The big fire. Exactly. Playing a fiddle or something, right? Was one of the accusations. Also persecuting Christians. Crucified them, burned them, threw them in the arena, animals tear them apart. This was the guy who started Christian persecution.

In 64 AD, a great fire broke out in Rome. It damaged most of the city. Now what's very interesting is for some reason at this point in time, Nero accused the Christians and blamed them for starting the fire.

When Christian Persecution Began

And that's when Christian persecution really began in Rome. You see, what's interesting is before this time, Christians and Jews weren't really indistinguishable in the first century because they all went to synagogue at that time, right? They all kept kosher, they all kept

Sabbath, as we talked about last week and the week before. And you guys realize that the Jews, by law, had freedom of worship, right? They were freed from imperial cult. We just talked about this in the Paul series, okay? No one else was really free of that. The Jews were free to do that as long as they go up there and make a couple sacrifices for Augustus in the temple every day. They did it. It was what they did. We don't like to talk about it, but they did it, right? In the name of Caesar, they made two sacrifices a day at the temple. Remember, Caesar was also a deity, so let's just not get into all that.

It was not until this time that Rome looked at the Christians and said, hey guys, wait, you're not Jewish? Is identity crisis starting to form? Wait, you're not Jews because the Jews are saying that you're not one of theirs because you worship this Messiah and they don't worship this Messiah. You're not freed from worshipping the imperial cult, basically Augustus. You guys need to worship. Well, of course, strict monotheist, we don't do that. Around this time is when that came to light.

What's even more interesting is a man by the name of Seneca in the first century. You guys know Seneca? Not Hunger Games. Okay, wrong guy. It's called Seneca the Younger. He was very close to Nero, and he writes that it was actually the Jews that started the fire. I'm not pointing blame. I don't know. Lots of different writings that accuse different people, but he writes because the Jewish neighborhood was like the only neighborhood that was not even touched by the fire. Obviously they started it. Now, either they started it or God pulled in Egypt again and just said, we're going to put a little protective hedge around these. I don't know. Nero's wife was heavily sympathetic to the Jews. Heavily. So let's put this together and this is a theory. Jews may or may not have started the fire. Nero's wife, sympathetic to the Jews. Jews are starting to not really like these Christians, especially in Rome. Could his wife have provoked him to attack the Christians because of the fire? We do not know. We do know a year after the fire he kicked his wife to death. Not sure why. Kicked her to death. Could have had her killed. So mad at her he kicked her to death. Lots of theories. Of course, the theory goes that he found out that she made him blame the wrong people or whatnot. We don't know. We don't know. It really doesn't add up. But regardless, Christians and Jews are not getting along. And now Christians are getting persecuted by the Roman Empire. So you think Jews really want to be associated with Christians if they're being targeted? I ain't no Christian. No. Hmm.

After the Temple Was Destroyed

During the Great Rebellion in 66 to 70 CE, what happened in 70 CE? The temple was destroyed. So, Josephus actually speaks about this. A lot of things contributed to the temple

being destroyed and this revolt forming. Essentially, one of the things was, oh, what's his name? Start with an E, I think. One of the priests in the temple, he was a chief priest, and he refused to stop offering sacrifices to the imperial court. Lots of the priests joined in after him. There were a lot of other things that were going on. I think one of the high priests got killed. Either by the Romans or the zealots or something happened. The zealots began causing a lot of political problems and killing folks and Romans around this time. Long story short, the Romans came in and put the smackdown on Jerusalem. It was a horrible day in history and they destroyed the second temple. I went too far.

After the temple was destroyed, you remember there were only two groups that survived, really. Religious groups. See, the Sadducees were all based around the temple. Without a temple, they could not survive, right? The Essenes, the Qumran community, they were all kind of rooted out by the Romans. The Pharisees were the ones that began doing something strange. They began taking temple worship and purity laws and saying that we should implement these into our everyday life. Essentially, that you are kind of like the temple. You can carry the presence of the temple with you if you obey all the purity laws and rituals that apply to the temple. And so when the temple was destroyed, the Pharisees survived because they didn't necessarily need the temple to continue in their doctrinal beliefs, if you will. They had already converted it to a personalized thing. And then you had the believers in Yeshua as well.

When You See the Abomination of Desolation

What's interesting is in [Matthew 24](#), Yeshua's talking about the end times. And if you guys remember, what does he say? He says, when you see the abomination of desolation, the abomination that makes the temple desolate, if you will, mentioned in Daniel, we know it has something to do with the temple. When you see this take place, what do you do? Go in your house, go in your basement, right? Now get your sword ready. Sharpen that sucker up. We're going to take on who, let's do this, right? From the text—remember, Revelation wasn't written yet. We didn't have all these like multi-headed monsters coming out of the ground and scorpion tail junk, right? We didn't have all this. So all we have is the oral tradition of what Yeshua said. When you see the abomination of desolation take place—in Daniel, that specifically had to do with the temple and it goes back to the Maccabees, all that mess. Run for the hills.

Where do you think the believers in Yeshua went when this revolt went on? All the Jews were standing firm saying we're not going to leave here and the Romans are slaughtering them and they're destroying the temple. Where are the brothers and sisters in Yeshua? I know what Yeshua said to do. How do you think that made the Jews feel to see their family members run

away as cowards when the holy temple is being destroyed? Just leave a good impression. I'm just trying to set up a background. I could be totally off base. We're just looking at history. Was it right for the believers at this time to run? I can't tell you that. We don't know, but we know based on history that something caused these attitudes to form.

Competition for Judean Souls

What's even more intriguing is, of course, after the temple was destroyed, we have the Pharisees really gaining ground and they're picking up the leftover. They're picking up the Judeans who are fixing to lose their faith because their faith revolved around the physical temple. It's just been destroyed. What are they going to do? And the Pharisees are offering a way out. Listen, guys. God has always allowed us to operate without a temple. We've just never been doing it. And so until the temple is rebuilt, your kitchen table can be the altar, man. We can salt that bread just like the sacrifices. We can do this. We can operate still with our faith in Hashem without a temple.

But you also have the believers coming to the Judeans who are losing hope saying, Listen guys, we have a greater temple that's still in heaven. We have a mediator, a greater high priest who wasn't slaughtered by the Romans who stands and lives forever in heaven. Just like Hebrews says, guys. This was competition. This was competition for the Jews and brothers and sisters who had just had their faith ripped apart. Between the Pharisees and the Christians in the first century—see, most of the New Testament, the Gospels, were written in the latter part of the first century. You wonder why the Pharisees are kind of looked at poorly. Because it was oral tradition. And these were four different witness accounts of the oral tradition, the story that had been told about our Messiah, going out to all nations, finally written down. I'm not saying that Messiah didn't argue with the Pharisees. Duh, he did. We know that. But we wonder why this idea of the Pharisees being these ultimate bad guys sprung out of the first century. It could have been this. They were the competition for the first century believers. The only two people in play for the souls of the Judeans, if you will. Is it right? Is it wrong? Do you get mad because I say that? It's just history. It is what it is, right?

Rebellion and Reputation

Following this great revolt, things kind of settled down. You guys know 40 years later, there was an emperor that was a little bit more sympathetic toward the Jews. He allowed them to go back and rebuild their temple. We didn't know that. About 40 years after, around 110 CE, he wanted them to build it somewhere else. And there was a back and forth, back and forth. And they

started construction until 115, when the Kittos War happened. Between two Jewish brothers that took leadership of an insurgency in Lower Judea and they would begin to attack Roman outposts and they caused another Jewish rebellion. Guess what? The Romans put the smack down again and they slaughtered thousands upon thousands of Jews.

The Bar Kokhba Rebellion? Son of the Star, right? Simon? Everybody kind of familiar with that? This guy was slick. He led a rebellion and he was looked at as the Messiah in the early second century. Many great rabbis viewed him as a messianic figure. Guess what? The Romans fought and they were defeated. We have Cassius Dio, first century author. He writes that 580,000 Jews were killed in this revolt, besides the numberless who died of hunger and disease. All of Judea, the same historian writes, became almost a desert.

What is the Judean population becoming known for now over the past hundred years? Rebellion, fighting back, murder of Romans. You're a Gentile coming to a faith that's kind of attached to Judaism.

Roman Hostility Toward Jews

You really want to be associated with Jews right now? Emperor Vespian, first century. He writes, and here's the attitude towards Jews. After the temple was destroyed, both the Sanhedrin and the office of high priest were abolished and worship of the temple site was forbidden. Say you're Jewish? Don't. I'm going to keep my feast day on this day. By whose authority? I thought the Sanhedrin was destroyed. Can't even go back into Jerusalem for a while to worship.

In the early second century, you brought it up, the Jewish fiscal tax, the half shekel. This was in this week's Torah portion. The half shekel, which previously had formed part of the upkeep of the temple of Jerusalem, was now exercised for the temple of Jupiter, even from those, according to that guy, who without publicly acknowledging that faith yet lived as Jews. So if you lived as a Jew, if you lived like someone who was Jewish, if the Romans saw you as Jewish, pay up. You gotta pay this extra tax now. I'm not saying it's right. I'm not saying it's wrong. This is history.

This creates kind of a background for why new Gentile converts coming in may not have wanted to associate themselves with Judaism or Jews, Judeans. But I'm not a Jew. I'm a Gentile. I'm grafted in though. I'm grafted into Abraham. I've become part of Abraham's seed. I'm part of Judaism, but I'm not a Judean. You can't have it both sides. Either you're gonna be part of the stock of Abraham or you're gonna have to somehow clip off the natural branches so that they're

not associated with you. Survival of your family depends on this. Survival of your finances depends on this. Your reputation depends on this.

Guys, this is what happened not even a hundred years after Yeshua died and rose from the dead. Petronius, first century. Here is the Roman attitude towards Jews around the time of Yeshua. Can we read some stuff about what Romans thought about Jews? These are the people who are going to become Christians one day.

What Romans Believed About Jews

The Jewish Sabbath particularly is adduced as proof that superstition enslaves man. In a fragment attributed to Petronius, the Jew was characterized as worshiping his pig god and cutting his foreskin with a knife to avoid expulsion from his own people and to be able to observe the Sabbath. This is what people thought of Judeans, the same people who are going to convert to Christianity in the future. This is the attitude they're going to have when they convert.

Tacitus: Jews were descendants of lepers in Egypt. They are perverse and disgusting.

Roman author Justin Martyr states: What Justin's about to do to all of the Christian communities that he influences is he's going to say the revolt that's happening or just happened is you were involved in whether you knew it or not and these Jews who were fighting for their independence against Rome wanted to kill you. If they had won, they would have killed you. And during this revolt, they took liberties to slay you. Now I'm not saying this happened, but I am saying that Justin said it happened. You see what I mean?

Emotion began to grow as the war ended. Jews ended up being banned from Jerusalem. In the 31st chapter of the first apology, Justin also affirms that Jews are Christians' foes and enemies, killing and punishing Christians whenever they have the power.

Why This History Matters

The reason I think it's important to go over all of this history is so that we don't get blindsided when we tell people we keep the Shabbat, the Sabbath. How many of you guys know that you tell friends and family, yeah, go to church on Saturday, go to fellowship on Saturday, we keep the Shabbat. That was done away with. What do you mean it was done away with? That's a Jewish thing. What are you, Jewish now? Anyone ever heard that? That's the second and third century attitude of Rome. That's a Jewish thing. We know good and well it's not a Jewish thing.

It's a God thing. Something that's given to us in the Ten Commandments for anyone who would identify themselves with Israel and worship the God of Israel. But because of the environment that was going on, it became, oh, so you're Jewish now. And it's always with that tone of voice, right?

Okay, sure, yeah. We need to look at the history of the Christian faith and see what happened. Whether it was right, whether it was wrong is irrelevant. We need to see what happened. Because if we refuse to, then someone's going to show us specific verses out of all the patristic writings. Most churches today worship on Sunday because of these same writings we're going over, viewed in a different light. I think we owe it to ourselves to discuss these writings as well and see where we stand. Maybe we can learn something.

Justin Martyr and the Bar Kokhba Revolt

To add to the claims concerning Jews agitating persecution towards Christians, he quickly described the Bar Kokhba revolt and the defeat of the Jews along with the ban on Jerusalem as a fulfillment of scripture. Citing [Isaiah 64](#) and [Jeremiah 27](#), he insisted it's God's will that Judea should be destroyed and Jews be banned from it. According to Justin, the reason for their expulsion is their alleged slaying of the just one and the persecution of his followers. You killed Jesus and you curse Christians. Therefore, God will punish you by destroying your people and kicking you out of Judea.

There was not a second century ministry devoted to bringing the gospel to the Jewish people. Let's just put it that way.

Pagan Converts Outnumber Jewish Believers

So remember, Christianity is bringing in many, many more pagan converts than Jewish. When Yeshua came, his ministry started out, pretty much everyone that was a believer in Yeshua was Jewish. As they went out to non-Jewish populated areas, they had a great response. Great response from many people. Lots of Gentiles. Lots of pagans.

When I say pagan, this is a word that for some reason we love to use. We love to use this word about everything—pagan this, pagan that, you're pagan, you do this, you worship on Sunday, so you're a pagan. We're going to talk about that. Everything's pagan. We have no idea what this word is defined as, okay?

The pagans of the first century weren't simply people who didn't believe in God. These were people who believed in multiple gods. We haven't even met this type of person and most of us have never met someone like this. We have someone coming out of the belief of multiple Roman gods and multiple Roman rituals and paganism coming into a faith where they're saying, yeah, I'm going to deny all of my gods—not just one god, but all of my gods that I've been serving. And I'm going to worship the one true God in the name of Jesus. I'm going to do that. This is paramount. This is awesome. People being redeemed, right?

But with many people coming into this faith, overwhelming the leadership, they brought with them a lot of baggage. Well, what do we do in this situation? Do we have anyone who's been a believer longer than five years here with a Jewish background? No, I guess we should do this based on where I came from. Things begin to change very quickly.

How Sunday Worship Replaced the Sabbath

So, quick review. We know from the patristic writings that the earliest known Christian church father writings that we know of never mention Sabbath or Sunday being changed, right? Never even hint at it at all. It's not really until early second century that this begins to be a thing. And even so, notice the writers are still having to explain why they're starting to meet on Sundays. Oh, because it's the first day of the week and that's when God started creation. Or this is the day when Yeshua rose from the dead. They're still having to make excuses to prop up why.

We know that this was widely accepted due to what you could call anti-Semitism, a division of the Jews, a hatred of the Jews. Remember all these Romans, these pagans that are coming into this faith in Jesus are coming in with the attitudes that they were taught, that they are elites and the Jews are beneath them. Now sure, we can say, "Listen, you gotta let go of that, man. That's just not the case. These are our brothers and sisters." But when you don't have that many voices speaking up, this is going to overtake the faith, and it did.

Sun Worship Influence on Sunday Worship

Let's talk about something else here. Let's talk about sun worship influence. This is gonna be fun. We know that the first day of the week was venerated in Rome as the day attributed to the sun, in a nutshell. The day held a lot of value with sun worship. The Jewish minority in the body was dwindling and ex-pagan converts were flooding in. Here's a quote from Samuel Bakayaki. Why did he present the creation of light on the first day as the first reason for the Christian Sunday gatherings? Apparently because the day was venerated by the Romans by

associating Christian worship with both a day and the symbolism of the pagan sun, as we suggested earlier, aimed at gaining the emperor's favorable appraisal of Christianity.

There's benefits to worshipping on Sunday in Rome. The day is already a venerated day. It's already an honored day in Rome, as the highest day of the week where some of the sun cults are very active. The suggestion here—and this is not the whole reason why Christians began to worship on Sundays—but the suggestion here is, oh, there's another benefit to this. We can have some benefits. We can earn some esteem from the emperor if he finds out these Christians are worshipping on the venerated day of the week, just like everyone else is.

Tertullian is very interesting. Another writer, a Christian church father, if you will, he writes something very interesting and he writes it very boldly because he wants to make sure everyone understands. Even though Christians are now beginning to meet and hold assemblies on the first day of the week, they're starting to push the Saturday Sabbath away with great force, especially in Rome because that's really where it started.

Rebuking the Sun Worship Charge

He completely rebuked any charge that Christians were sun worshipers due to their day of worship or their manner of prayer. We need to pay very close attention to this because even though sun worship had some indirect support for why early Christians began to worship on Sunday, we have church fathers and Christians saying, "You morons, we're not worshipping the sun just because we're doing it on the same day." If we have documented evidence of early Christians rebuking the very notion that they give any honor to the sun, shouldn't we take a look at that and try to get a clearer picture of what their intention was by holding their ecclesia on Sundays?

There's a sacred cow in Hebrew roots circles. Everyone who goes to church on Sunday is sun-worshipping, they say. All of them pagan. Every last one of them. I added this slide this morning because I wanted to read it to you guys. Sorry you can't read it. Take a picture, zoom in.

Tertullian addresses those with more information who believe that the Son is our God. He writes:

"We shall be counted Persians perhaps, though we do not worship the orb of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere on his own disk. The idea, no doubt, has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you, many of you, are under pretense sometimes of worshipping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise. In the same way, if we devote Sunday to rejoicing from a far different reason than the

sun worship, we have resemblance to those who devote the day of Saturn to ease and luxury, though they too are far away from Jewish ways, of which indeed they are ignorant. These things we have discussed with great abundance, that we may not seem willingly to pass by any rumor against us unrefuted. Having thoroughly cleared ourselves, we turn now to the exhibition of what our religion really is."

Basically, it's based around Christ.

Why Christians Chose Sunday

A lot of people were associating early Christians with sun worship because they chose Sunday as the first day of the week, mainly because of the resurrection, mainly because it's the first day of creation, and also because there's a practical benefit: we don't look like a bunch of freaks in Rome worshiping on a day that Romans don't typically observe. We don't have to be Jewish. If we make our own day, we're just another cult. So at least on Sunday, we'll blend in a little bit, even though we're not going to be sun worshipers.

He makes the case: if we're worshiping the sun on this day, then you who take a break and honor your day in worship of Saturn—that's like saying you're Jewish.

How many of you know there are millions of Christians today who go to church every single Sunday, devoutly? They did not wake up Sunday morning and say, "You know what, I can't wait to go worship the sun today." Nobody's going to church to worship the sun. People are going to church because this is what the church fathers in the second, third, and fourth centuries taught the movement to do.

Facing East and the Son of Righteousness

Early Christians prayed towards the east. There are many different, debatable reasons why they did this. Sun worshipers did this. Most Jews did this when they faced Jerusalem. When they were accused of worshiping the sun, it's interesting because they'd reflect back and quote [Malachi 4:2](#), right? A messianic verse about Messiah, and it says "the sun of righteousness will come with healing in his wings"—but it's not sun, S-U-N, it's son, S-O-N. The son of righteousness. So we worship the son? Yeah, we worship the son of righteousness, the light of righteousness, Messiah Jesus.

They thought it was a joke that they were being accused of son worship. That's basically the Persians worshiping Sol Invictus.

Guys, we have to stop being naive, ignorant, and arrogant, saying that because a Christian goes to church on Sunday means they're worshiping the sun. We don't meet on Sunday because we understand the premise of the Sabbath and what it means and represents and how it's a token of God's redemption and a taste of what the millennial kingdom is going to be like when Messiah returns.

Unfortunately, the greater body was taught differently. They were taught to separate these Jewish things from their faith in their Jewish Messiah, and they grabbed hold of Sunday fellowship. A lot of worship went on on Sunday. And am I saying that sun worship and elements of sun worship did not penetrate through the church later on? No, I'm not. Christian faith has been like a big old ball of duct tape just thrown through history. It picks up a lot of stuff. So does Judaism. Sorry to break it to you. That was my rant.

The Logic of the Accusation

We have to be very careful because if we accuse people of worshiping the sun on Sunday because they go to church on Sunday, then as Tertullian even states, we condemn ourselves with the very same logic of worshiping Saturn because we're meeting here right now. That came a little bit later. So what we read later on is what seems to happen as a transitional state—a theory that most scholars agree with—which is that a lot of Christians were drawn between the churches in the east who were keeping Sabbath and Rome and the churches of the west who were keeping Sunday.

The Transitional State

And so what they would do is they would meet, either they were still accepted in some synagogues in the far east, or they would meet on Shabbat and then carry into the night their study and worship, right? Just like we used to do at the fellowships. We would have Havdalah, we'd study, and then we'd worship, and then after dinner, as the night went down on the first day of the week, early in the morning on the first day, we would stay up until 10 o'clock at night, mid-Russian and stuff.

The idea is that this was possibly a transitional state at some point, which eventually led to the sunrise service. We're not really sure. I didn't prepare to address that. We know that the full-blown sunrise service thing with Resurrection Day could have also been attributed to, in Mark chapter 16, I think it's verse 9, where it talks about Yeshua rising early on the first day of the week. That's why we gather together.

You could definitely pin sun worship on that. That's one part, but there's also some scriptural footholds that early church fathers cite to explain why they did that.

Easter and Passover

Of course, we know that the early Christians didn't celebrate Easter on Sunday. It was the 14th of Nisan. It was Passover. And that existed through several centuries. A big debate there.

In Eusebius' commentary on [Psalm 91](#), Jerome, a 4th century church father, writes: "If it's called the day of the sun by the pagans, we most willingly acknowledge it as such, since it is on this day that the light of the world has appeared, and on this day the sun of justice, sun of righteousness, if you will, has risen."

The Rise of Sunday Veneration

See, various sun cults were predominant in Rome by the early 2nd century, and this seems to attract the imagination and interest of converts from paganism itself. Christians began to venerate the day of the sun over Saturn's day through political reasons, as we discussed, by further distinguishing themselves from the Jews. This all happened very quickly, and it seems like a mosh-posh series of events that took place. It wasn't very black and white. It wasn't like, "Oh, all the Christians became sun worshipers overnight. Oh, it was all Constantine. He made a decree, and poof, everyone changed." It wasn't the case. This was something that happened over the course of 100 years.

At the end of the first century through the second century, people wanted to distinguish themselves from Jews so much that they would rather be likened unto pagans than, heaven forbid, be recognized or associated with Jews. And the Jews were fond of it: "We don't want you to associate with us. Come over and spread your Jesus to all of our brothers and sisters, and then when we need them to fight with us, they run away?"

Not Sanctioning Sol Invictus

It should be clearly stated, however, that by adopting the day of the sun, Christians did not intend to sanction or encourage worship of Sol Invictus, which actually became prominent after Christianity was established. It's very interesting how they came up beside each other. This is an insinuation that Tertullian emphatically repudiates. But rather to commemorate the day of such divine acts as the creation of light and the resurrection of the son of righteousness—both

events that occurred on the day of the sun and could also be effectively proclaimed through the rich symbology of the sun.

Both Christians and Jews, according to **A Convenient Hatred: A History of Anti-Semitism** (page 31), began to define themselves and their religion by emphasizing the differences between their two groups. One of the first Christian writers to do so was Melito. I'm going to say "Melito." I'm not really sure how to pronounce that. Melito.

The Deicide Accusation

So, I want to back up for a second. This writer—the term "homily" is kind of anachronistically placed. It was a Haggadah. He did a Passover Haggadah. He reformed the Jewish Haggadah for Passover. And he put in there the accusation of deicide, if you will, them killing God. So we have Christians, yeah, we're going to have a Passover Haggadah. Let's celebrate Passover, right? By the way, can you imagine? Doing Passover in the middle, and the Jews killed God?

Christian Identity vs. Jewish Identity

I mean, what do you do to that? His goal was not to incite violence against Jews, but to strengthen the Christian identity and his parishioners by turning us against them. At the time, Christians in Sardis and other parts of the Roman Empire were often a persecuted minority with virtually no power, right? Got to remember Christians were still being persecuted. They were still a minority. Who are you? You're the ones who defy the Roman Empire, won't worship the cult. These guys had no power. His purpose was to further define, give you a sense of pride. Listen, you're not Jewish, you're a Christian, so stand strong. It was only in later centuries when Christians actually gained political power, thanks to Constantine and others. Would Melito's words be used to justify discrimination, persecution, and murder? See, Christians were looking for identity in the second century because they had thrown away their identity in Abraham and their identity with Judah. And they were looking for a new identity.

The Origins of Christian Holidays

There's a lot of stuff about pagan feast days like Christmas and Easter, right? And sometimes we make a lot of stuff up just to fill in the gaps of why Christmas and Easter are so pagan. Guys, the reason I don't do Christmas and Easter is because of why they were really created. They were formed by early Christians to take the place of the feast. It's that simple. Yes, they have a lot of elements that over time got stuck with them. I mean, undeniable elements. But in their

origin, the reason they wanted these days to form was because they no longer really had that. They didn't have Sukkot. They didn't have Shavuot really. Pentecost got changed, the whole dynamics of it, right? Didn't have unleavened bread. Passover was pretty much on its way out. Never really accepted in Rome. Yom Teruah, meh. Yom Kippur, we got Jesus, Jack. I mean, they had no more festivals. Hey, we're vacant now. Christmas and Easter, essentially, in a nutshell. We don't want to do those Jewish holidays anymore.

Constantine and Sunday Worship

So, was that helpful? The accusation of sun worship being involved with why the church began to worship on Sunday is not a black and white issue. It's not yes, they worship the sun. They claimed the benefits of worshipping on the day of the sun, but stood strong in their writing saying, "Listen, we ain't a bunch of sun worshipers. Call us Persians all you want. We know who we are. Morons." We know that Constantine, in the fourth century as the leader of Rome, decreed that Sunday would essentially be the new Sabbath. We're all familiar with this, right? So I have a question: Did all Christians keep Sunday after Constantine's decree, right? No? No? That's what I was taught. I was taught he created this and his decree was solid.

Do you have a little bit more time to go through a few quotes with me? Maybe a few. One... Thank you, Eric.

Historical Documents on Saturday Observance

It was generally a practice of the eastern churches and some churches of the west—in the church of Milan, it seems—that Saturday was held in fair esteem. Not that the eastern churches or any of the churches which observed that day were inclined to Judaism, but that they came together on Sabbath day to worship Jesus Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath. That's in East Italy around the time of the fourth century.

The ancient Christians were careful in their observance of Saturday or the seventh day. It is plain that all the oriental churches and the greatest part of the world observed the Sabbath as a festival. Likewise, this author tells us they held religious assemblies on the Sabbath, not because they were infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. Epiphany says the same.

Remember when these authors are talking about Judaism, they're struggling with what Judaism had become in the first century. Remember, Judaism was an identity marker. It was basically a religion created to identify you—you would wear Judaism and the things within it or the

different sects of Judaism to identify yourself as a Judean, which they believed got you in the covenant. It's exactly what Paul is fighting in [Romans 4](#). You saying you're better than Abraham? Because he wasn't even circumcised when he got in the covenant. But that's none of my business.

Moving Through the Centuries

Council of Laodicea—of all the documents. Let's go further in history. How about the 5th century in Europe? Here's where we see a bridge between the two days. Sidonius, again in the 5th century, have neglected the celebration of the Sabbath. The portions of the church—the ecclesiae that were farther away from Rome—still kept these decrees.

Sixth century, Scotland. We seem to see here an allusion to the custom observed in the early monastic church of Ireland of keeping the day of rest on Saturday or the Sabbath. History of the Catholic Church in Scotland. Having continued his labors in Scotland 34 years, he clearly foretold his death, and on Saturday, in the month of June, said to his disciple, "This day is called the Sabbath. That is the rest day, and such will truly be to me, for it will put an end to my labors." Butler's Lives of the Saints.

Warnings From the Medieval Church

7th century. Should we keep going? Pope Gregory. Pope Gregory. Declared that when the Antichrist should come, he's going to keep the Saturday as the Sabbath. Oh, I shouldn't have put that in there. I must have misread that. What in the world? Is he saying the Antichrist is going to keep Saturdays? Why is he saying this?

Moreover, this same Pope issued an official pronouncement against a section of the city of Rome itself because Christian believers there rested and worshiped on the Sabbath. People in his own town, resting and worshiping on the Sabbath. You guys know that when the Antichrist comes, he's going to keep that Jewish day. You better stop. Always seems to be a remnant throughout history.

Eighth century. Way east, right? Anybody? It's close. And the Orpheans knew the new encyclopedia of religious knowledge. I wanted to throw this in here. I know we're doing a lot of reading. I want you guys to realize if you don't walk away from anything else from this series, at least from this week and last week, we have historical documents in Christian history to back up why we do what we do. We are not some cult that has just formed out of the imagination of our own eyes. We are not some product of some movement of awakening that poof, yeah, I'm

going to be a rogue and further divide the body and do the Sabbath just because I want to. Guys, we are part of the same remnant that has survived the last 2,000 years that was originally attached from the body of Messiah.

Debates and Pseudo-Ignatius

There are debates about from Sabbath keepers to those who meet on Sunday, and these scholars use the same documents that we're showing here to state both of their cases. I at least wanted to expose you to that between last week and this week. So we spoke about Ignatius, right? And there's a document in the late fourth century that was written called Pseudo-Ignatius, so it was an anonymous writer that wrote as if he was this church father, okay? It's not necessarily something that we put a lot of credit into, but I'm reading it to show you what was going on in the late 4th century in the central Roman province. Okay?

Pseudo-Ignatius says, let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner and rejoice in the days of idleness. So whenever you see "Jewish manner," it hones in on what the Jews were doing, what Judaism was about, and what Yeshua and Paul himself were battling—the manner of Judaism. And rejoice in days of idleness, not doing anything, but let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation of the law. Not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, and walking within a prescribed space. You can only walk this far on a Sabbath day, right? Nor finding delight in dancing, which has no sense in it.

Yeah, don't dance around. Don't you Jews dance around? They eat a bunch on Sabbath?

The Practice of Fasting and Spiritual Sabbath

One of the first things the church fathers did in the second and third centuries was tell everyone to start fasting on Saturday. Fasting on Saturday. And you'll see that a lot, right? You'll find Seventh-day Adventist quotes on their websites where they're saying keep the Sabbath because they're fasting. When they initially wanted to fast on the Sabbath, that was something they wanted to do to separate Christian observance from Jewish observance, because you don't fast on the Sabbath, right? One day we don't fast on. What are you talking about? This is a day of delight. We're going to dance. We're going to prepare food the night before, but man, we're going to come in. It's going to be great. Right? Nah, don't eat anything. Fast. That was one thing. So if you ever read a document that talks about that, don't automatically assume that they're endorsing Sabbath. That was something done to separate them from Jews, if you will.

And so we have this author sitting here. Listen, you're going to keep, you can meditate on the Torah and you got to keep it in a spiritual manner, but don't go dancing around and eating all this food and all this mess. What are you talking about? Finding delight in all these things. Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and the chief of all other days. Even here in the fourth century, we see a division of what's going on.

A Legacy for Future Generations

I figured that we owed ourselves a 21st century quote among all of these quotes. So perhaps 2000 years from now, when somebody looks back and they've been taught that the Sabbath was done away with 4,000 years ago, at least there will be an official quote made in this fellowship that holds true to what our Messiah stood for.

The Sabbath as a Sign of Redemption

Even today we rest on the Sabbath, Saturday, just for clarification. In reflection and effort to emulate our Master and Lord Yeshua Messiah, we keep this day as a token of our covenant with God Almighty and as an act of remembrance of our redemption through His Son. This is why we do what we do. The Sabbath isn't some day that we choose to come worship. Guys, we could come hang out in here any day of the week. I don't care, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. We come here this day of the week because we get to come together and wear our jersey for the kingdom. We get to wear the token for the kingdom, the active token for the kingdom.

This is not simply a sign of our covenant with God. And that's a huge aspect of it. And I love it. Friday nights, I love seeing the sun go down, right? Going into a sphere of Kedusha. I love it. I can't wait to get into that when we do the temple series.

Guys, just like [Deuteronomy 5:13](#) says, the reason we keep the Sabbath also is to remember that God is the one that redeemed us. We didn't redeem ourselves. Maybe some of you redeemed yourselves. I didn't redeem myself. And you can talk all you want. I know you didn't redeem yourself. God redeemed us. And he planted this day as a sign of us to not only remember our redemption, but to live in our redemption.

Yeshua paved his entire ministry on top of the Sabbath for a reason. Listen, guys, you know that redemption from Egypt where you were slaves? Yeah. [Romans 6](#) talks all about this. Through me, you're going to be freed of spiritual Egypt where you're slaves to sin. And you know what else? The millennial kingdom, when I come back, it's going to be like this, where everything is

restored, where everything is perfected on the Sabbath, where redemption will always be remembered because we're going to be living in a thousand-year reign that is reflected of what today is all about.

Stand Bold in Your Faith

Don't let anybody shame you for keeping the Sabbath. You're keeping the token that God gave you. Welcome to the kingdom. This is what you get to do now, and it's such a blessing. If someone ever tells you, what are you trying to be Jewish? Listen, man, I'm trying to wear the token that God gave me because he loved me so much to send his son to redeem me. Now, if you want to call that Jewish, that's fine. My brothers in Israel do it for the same reason I do, because of redemption. And that's what it's a sign of.

We have to be very careful that we do not forget this. And we have to be very careful, guys, that we don't make the same mistakes of our forefathers. Just because it's not popular to do something doesn't mean you need to stop doing it. Just because there might be consequences for doing something doesn't mean you need to stop doing it. I don't care how scared you are. It doesn't matter. You stand bold. Do not make the same mistakes as our church fathers did when they found that their reputation or their fear for their safety or their pocketbooks were more important than a gift that God gave to them to uphold above all other things.

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Watch or listen: foundedintruth.com/bible-teachings/what-is-the-sabbath-part-3-a-changing-attitude/

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