

Sabbath History

1st Century AD. Jesus

1. "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." Luke 4:16
2. Jesus: "...The sabbath was made for man..." Mark 2:27
3. Paul: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." Acts 17:2-3
4. Paul and Gentiles. "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. And the next Sabbath came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God." Acts 13:42,44

2nd Century. Early Christians

"The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and spent the day in devotion and sermons. And it is not to be doubted but they derived this practice from the Apostles themselves, as appears by several scriptures to that purpose." *Dialogue on the Lord's Day*, p.189. London: 1701. By Dr. T.H. Morer (Church of England).

3rd and 4th Centuries. Orient and Most of the World

1. "The ancient Christians were very careful in the observation 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. . . . Athanasius likewise tells us that they held religious assemblies on the Sabbath, not because they were infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath; Epiphanius says the same." *Antiquities of the Christian Church, Vol. II. Book XX, chap 3, Sec. 1* 66.1137, 1138.
2. Council of Laodicea. "From the apostles' time until the council of Laodicea, which was about the year 364, the holy observation of the Jews' Sabbath continued, as may be proved out of many authors; yea, notwithstanding the decree of the council against it." *Sunday a Sabbath, John Ley, p. 163. London: 1640.*
3. "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's Day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible,

do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ." *Catholic Church Council in Laodicea, 364AD, Canon 29.*

5th Century. Constantinople

"The people of Constantinople and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria." *Socrates, Ecclesiastical History, Book 7, chap. 19.*

6th Century. Rome

"About 590, Pope Gregory, in a letter to the Roman people, denounced as the prophets of Antichrist those who maintained that work ought not to be done on the seventh day." *James T. Ringgold, The Law of Sunday, p. 267.*

7th Century. Scotland and Ireland

"It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times, in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labour. They obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week." *Professor James C. Moffatt, D.D., Professor of Church History at Princeton, The Church in Scotland, p. 140.*

8th Century. India, China, Persia

"Widespread and enduring was the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath among the believers of the Church of the East and the St. Thomas Christians of India, who never were connected with Rome. It also was maintained among those bodies which broke off from Rome after the Council of Chalcedon namely, the Abyssinians, the Jacobites, the Maronites, and Armenians." *Schaff-Herzog, The New Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, art. Nestorians; also Realencyclopaedie fur Protestantische Theologie und Kirche, art Nestorianer.*

10th Century. Church of the East. Kurdistan

"The Nestorians eat no pork and keep the Sabbath. They believe in neither auricular confession nor purgatory." *Schaff-Herzog, The New Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, art. Nestorians.*

11th Century. Scotland

They held that Saturday was properly the Sabbath on which they abstained from work. *Celtic Scotland, Vol. 2, p. 350.*

12th Century. Wales

"There is much evidence that the Sabbath prevailed in Wales universally until A.D. 1115, when the first Roman bishop was seated at St. David's. The old Welsh Sabbath-keeping churches did not even then altogether bow the knee to Rome, but fled to their hiding places." *Lewis, Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America, Vol. 1, p. 29.*

13th Century. Waldenses of France

1. "The inquisitors. . . [declare] that the sign of a Vaudois, deemed worthy of death, was that he followed Christ and sought to obey the commandments of God." *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, H.C. Lea, Vol. 1.*

2. Revelation 12:17 & 14:12. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." . . . "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

15th Century. Norway

1. "We are informed that some people in different districts of the kingdom, have adopted and observed Saturdaykeeping. It is severely forbidden - in holy church canon - one and all to observe days excepting those which the holy Pope, archbishop, or the bishops command. Saturdaykeeping must under no circumstances be permitted hereafter further than the church canon commands. Therefore, we counsel all the friends of God throughout all Norway who want to be obedient towards the holy church to let this evil of Saturdaykeeping alone; and the rest we forbid under penalty of severe church punishment to keep Saturday holy." *Catholic Provincial Council at Bergen. 1435 Dip. Norveg., 7, 397.*

2. Daniel 7:25, "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws."

16th Century. Council of Trent

1. "On the 18th of January, 1563, the Council of Trent ruled that Tradition is greater than Scripture, after a powerful speech by the Archbishop of Reggio, in which he said that the fact that the Church had changed the Fourth Commandment clearly proved that Tradition was greater than Scripture." *H.J. Holtzman, Kanon und Tradition, 1859 edition, p. 263.*

2. Matthew 15:3, 6-9. Jesus replied "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?", "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

3. Holland and Germany: Babara of Thiers, who was executed in 1529, declared: "God has commanded us to rest on the seventh day." *Martyrology of the Churches of Christ, commonly called Baptists, during the era of the Reformation, from the Dutch of T.J. Van Braght, London 1850, 1, pp. 113-4.*

4. Russia: "The accused [Sabbathkeepers] were summoned; they openly acknowledged the new faith, and defended the same. The most eminent of them, the secretary of state, Kuritzyn, Ivan Maximow, Kassian, archimandrite of the Jury Monastery of Novgorod, were condemned to death, and burned publicly in cages, at Moscow, Dec. 27, 1503." (*Council, Moscow, 1503*). *H. Sternberf, Geschichte der Juden (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 1117-122.*

5. Sweden: "This zeal for Saturdaykeeping continued for a long time; even little things which might strengthen the practice of keeping Saturday were punished." *Bishop Anjou, Svenska Kirkans Historia efter Motet i Upsala.*

6. Europe: About the year 1520 many of these Sabbathkeepers found shelter on the estate of Lord Leonhardt of Lichtensein, "as the princes of Lichtenstein held to the observance of the true Sabbath." *History of the Sabbath, J.N. Andrews, p. 649, ed.*

7. India: "The famous Jesuit, Francis Xavier, called for the Inquisition, which was set up in Goa, India, in 1560, to check the 'Jewish wickedness' (Sabbathkeeping)." *Adeney, The Greek and Eastern Churches, p. 527-528.*

8. Abyssinia: "It is not therefore, in imitation of the Jews, but in obedience to Christ and His holy apostles, that we observe that day." (*Abyssinian legate at court of Lisbon, 1534*). *Geddes' Church History of Ethiopia, pp. 87-8.*

17th Century

1. England: "Here in England are about nine or ten churches that keep the Sabbath, besides many scattered disciples, who have been eminently preserved." *Stennet's letters, 1668 and 1670. Cox. Sab., 1, 268.*

2. Dr. Peter Chamberlain: Dr. Peter Chamberlain was physician to King James and Queen Katherine. The inscription on the monument over his grave says Dr. Chamberlain was "a Christian, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, being baptized about the year 1648, and keeping the seventh day for the Sabbath above thirty-two years."

3. America: "Stephen Mumford, the first Sabbathkeeper in America came from London in 1664." *History of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference by Jas. Bailey, pp. 237-238.*

4. England: "It will surely be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture to adopt the first." *John Milton, Sab. Lit, 2, 46-54.*

18th Century

1. Rumania (1760): "Joseph II's edict of tolerance did not apply to the Sabbatarians, some of whom again lost all of their possessions." *Jahrgang 2, 254.*

2. Bohemia and Moravia: "The condition of the Sabbatarians [from 1635 to 1867] was dreadful. Their books and writings had to be delivered to the Karlsburg Consistory to become the spoil of flames." *Adolf Dux, Aus Ungarn, pp. 2889-291. Leipzig, 18880.*

3. America: "But before Zinzendorf and the Moravians at Bethlehem thus began the observance of the Sabbath and prospered, there was a small body of German Sabbathkeepers in Pennsylvania." *Rupp's History of Religious Denominations in the United States, pp. 109-123.*

19th Century to Present

1. America: The Seventh-day Adventist movement was formed around 1844.

2. Orient: "In many of the Oriental churches the Sabbath (Saturday) was still observed like Sunday, while in the West a large number, by way of opposition to Jewish

institutions, held a fast on that day." *George Park Fisher, History of the Christian Church, (New York: Scribner, 1900), 1 18; quoted in Bible Students' Source Book (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 866*

3. China: "The Taipings when asked why they observed the seventh day Sabbath, replied that it was, first, because the Bible taught it, and second, because their ancestors observed it as a day of worship." *A Critical History of the Sabbath and the Sunday.*

4. Sweden: "We will now endeavor to show that the sanctification of the Sabbath has its foundation and its origin in a law which God at creation itself established for the whole world, and as a consequence thereof is binding on all men in all ages." *May 30, 1863, p. 169. Evangelisten (The Evangelist) Stockholm, May 30 to August 15, 1863 (organ of the Swedish Baptist Church).*

5. The following is a quote from a Catholic magazine, *The Catholic Mirror*: "The Catholic Church for over 1,000 years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day [of worship] from Saturday to Sunday. . . . In the Old Testament, reference is made 126 times to the Sabbath, and all these texts conspire harmoniously in voicing the will of God commanding the seventh day to be kept, because God Himself first kept it, making it obligatory on all as 'a perpetual covenant.' Nor can we imagine any one foolhardy enough to question the identity of Saturday with the Sabbath or seventh day, seeing that the people of Israel have been keeping Saturday from the giving of the law 2514 BC to the present . . . Examining the New Testament from cover to cover critically, we find the Sabbath referred to 61 times. We find, too, that the Savior invariably selected the Sabbath (Saturday) to teach in the synagogues and work miracles. The four Gospels refer to the Sabbath (Saturday) 51 times. . . . Hence the conclusion is inevitable . . . that of those who follow the Bible as their guide, the Israelites and the Seventh-day Adventists, have the exclusive weight of evidence on their side, whilst the biblical Protestant has not a word in self-defense for his substitution of Sunday for Saturday. . . . They have ignored and condemned their teacher, the Bible . . . and they have adopted a day [instituted and] kept by the Catholic Church." *Official publication of Cardinal Gibbons and the Papacy in the United States, published in Baltimore, Maryland, September 1893.*

We gratefully acknowledge J.F. Coltheart, who personally consulted old manuscripts and the original sources of many of these quotations in the libraries and museums of Europe and also in Constantinople and the East.