



DISCOVERING REVELATION

Revelation's Sign of God

In Revelation 14:6-12, we find a special three-fold message that goes out to the whole world just before Jesus returns. One of the key issues in this message is *worship*. It draws a stark contrast between those who worship “Him that made”—the Creator—and those who worship the beast. What does it mean?

The first chapter of Genesis records how God created our world, and at the end of six days, God looked at what He had made and declared that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). Creation was perfect! There was no pain, no suffering, no disease and no death. In only six days, God had achieved perfection—but He wasn't quite finished.

On the seventh day, God did something more. Genesis 2:1-3 tells us that on the *seventh day*, God did three things: (1) He rested, (2) He blessed the seventh day, and (3) He sanctified it, or set it apart for holy use. He didn't do that with the other six days! Why did He do this? Was He tired? No. Isaiah 40:28 explains clearly that the Creator doesn't get tired. Rather, He was setting an example for *us*. He was giving us a day on which we could rest from the day-to-day affairs of life and simply spend time with Him. Every week, there is a day that reminds everyone that God *made* everything around them. If God had chosen a pillar as a monument to His creative power, somebody could have knocked it down. If He had put a plaque on the wall, somebody could have ripped it down. But God chose a day—something that nobody could tamper with—and to this day, we still have a seven-day week as a result.

This special monument in time was so important to God that you will find it in His Ten Commandment moral law (see Exodus 20:8-11)—and here God explains that the reason to keep the seventh day holy is as a memorial to His creative power. Some have wrongly assumed that the seventh day was set apart only for the Jews at Mt. Sinai. The question might be asked: How many Jews were there in the Garden of Eden? None! There were no Jews for hundreds and hundreds of years after creation. The day was set apart and blessed long before Moses received the Ten Commandments on tables of stone.

Exodus 16:26-30 illustrates this. Before Moses received a copy of the Ten Commandments, the Israelites were reprimanded by God for gathering food on the Sabbath day. Obviously, the Sabbath was binding *before* Mt. Sinai—it has existed since creation!

The Sabbath is important, because it keeps us focused on the fact that God *is* the Creator. That is what sets Him apart from anything else human beings might choose to worship. Bible passages such as 1 Chronicles 16:26, Psalm 96:5 and Jeremiah 10:11, 12 point out that what sets God apart from false gods is His creative ability. False gods cannot create something out of nothing. Neither can Satan, and that is why he hates the fourth commandment. It points out that he is not a real god! Satan has declared that *he* would like to sit on God's throne (see Isaiah 14:12-14), but the fourth commandment clearly points out why he isn't qualified. Out of all the commandments, the fourth commandment is the biggest reminder that Lucifer is *not* God. And

so if there is one commandment that the devil hates more than all the rest, guess which one it is going to be?

The Sabbath was still in effect when Jesus walked the earth, too: Luke 4:16 tells us that it was Jesus' *custom* to go to church on the Sabbath day—and if He was thinking about changing the day of worship, He never said a word about it! In fact, by the time He died at Calvary, His followers were still keeping the Sabbath. Luke 23:54-56 tell us that after the crucifixion, His followers still kept the Sabbath “according to the commandment.” Apparently, Jesus had never mentioned a change in the day of worship!

Actually, Jesus pointed out that His followers would still be keeping the Sabbath long after He returned to heaven. In Matthew 24:15-20, Jesus discusses the destruction of Jerusalem—an event approximately 40 years after the resurrection—and indicates that the Sabbath would still be in effect. The disciples did not change the day of worship, either. Passages such as Acts 13:14, Acts 13:42-44, Acts 16:13 and Acts 18:4 make it clear that they continued to observe the Sabbath long after the resurrection.

The fact is, you simply can't change God's Ten Commandment moral law. James 2:10-12 teaches that if you break one commandment, you break them all. They are a cohesive unit—you can't dispense with one of them. In Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus said that not “one jot or one tittle”—not the smallest detail—would pass from God's law until heaven and earth pass away. Nowhere does the Bible ever say that the Sabbath was abolished or changed.

Many people feel that Sunday worship is a memorial to the resurrection, yet if you search the Bible, you will never find any instruction to that effect. The Bible *does* provide two memorials of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus: baptism (Romans 6) and the communion service (Luke 22:19). But Sunday, or the first day of the week, is never established as the new day of worship.

BUT ISN'T SUNDAY THE “LORD'S DAY”?

That expression is only ever found once in the Bible, in Revelation 1:10. Read it—there is nothing there to indicate that God is talking about the first day of the week. The context of the rest of the Bible, in fact, makes it obvious which day is the Lord's day. Matthew 12:8 and Ezekiel 20:20 both declare the Sabbath to be the Lord's day! The fourth commandment says that the seventh day is the “Sabbath of the Lord.” Sunday isn't the Lord's day—the seventh day is!

BUT SHOULDN'T WE SIMPLY KEEP EVERY DAY FOR THE LORD?

Of course, we ought to serve God and dedicate ourselves to Him every day, but the fourth commandment not only declares the seventh day holy, but it also declares that the other six days are for working! (Exodus 20:8-11) The other six days were not blessed by God and set apart for holy use. They are for working. The seventh day is unlike any other day.

BUT HASN'T THE CALENDAR BEEN TAMPERED WITH?

It has—but the weekly cycle has *never changed*. In 1582, 10 days were dropped from the calendar, but Thursday the 4th of October was still followed by Friday—the 15th of October! The Sabbath is the same day it was in Jesus' day. In fact, in at least 108 of the world's languages, Saturday is still called the Sabbath!

There is no doubt about it. The Sabbath was there at creation, it was there for the Israelites, it was there in Jesus' day, and it was there for the disciples and the New Testament church. It will still be there in the world to come, too! Isaiah 66:22, 23 tells us that in “the new heavens and the new earth,” we will still worship God on the Sabbath!

In the last days, says the Bible, a warning message goes out to the whole world: “Worship Him that *made...*” (Revelation 14:7). The issue is allegiance. “If you love Me,” said Jesus, “keep My commandments” (John 14:15). How did it happen? Aren't there texts in the Bible that talk about the first day of the week? We'll see you tomorrow!