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THE CHRISTIAN DAY OF WORSHIP GATHERINGS:
ITS NEW TESTAMENT PRACTICE
AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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May 1990

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THE CHRISTIAN DAY OF WORSHIP EXPERIMENT
ITS NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE
AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In just the last decades a phenomenal change has begun stripping away civil and ecclesiastical Sunday observance. Increased leisure time and spiritual indifference have caused a relaxation of respect for Sunday.

Some Christian leaders have advocated a stricter observance of a weekly day of rest and/or worship to avert this erosion. These spokesmen range from the strictest of the Christian seventh day sabbath observers (Saturday)¹ to the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States² who believe that Sunday observance, especially by resting, is an adequate expression of the Decalogue today. Both Saturday sabbatarians and Sunday sabbatarians have the common goal that the benefits of the quality life which God intended for His creatures, especially as conveyed by the Old Testament sabbath, would restore for Christians today the same joy and vitality as that experienced in the Apostolic Christian communities.

The Problem

Lutherans have consistently considered Sunday observance a matter of Christian liberty. That is, the Decalogue

enjoins the believer to worship, but Christians are free as to the day. The Augsburg Confession (AC), Article 28, teaches that churches do not have the right to establish rules in areas of Christian liberty, such as the observances of days, lest the material principle of Lutheranism (i.e., Christianity), justification by grace through faith, be compromised by "works."³

In discussing the historic change of the special day of worship by the church from Saturday to Sunday, AC 28.34 states that "bishops do not have power to institute or establish anything contrary to the Gospel."⁴ AC 28.36 cautions against imposing upon Christians such ordinances and traditions as mandatory Sunday worship: "for the glory of Christ's merit is blasphemed when we presume to earn grace by such ordinances."⁵ Regarding Sunday observance AC 28.53 warns that "bishops or pastors may make regulations so that everything in the churches is done in good order, but not as a means of obtaining God's grace"⁶ AC 28.58 states that the ceremonial law has been abrogated: "Those who consider the appointment of Sunday in place of the Sabbath as a necessary institution are very much mistaken, for the Holy Scriptures have abrogated the Sabbath and teach that after the revelation of the Gospel all ceremonies of the old law may be omitted."⁷ AC 28.63 reads: "Some argue that although

Sunday must not be kept as of divine obligation, it must nevertheless be kept as almost of divine obligation, and they prescribe the kind and amount of work that may be done on the day of rest." (meaning by this that the Roman Church placed Sunday observance nearly on a par with the Third Commandment's requirements).⁸ To summarize, the Augsburg Confession teaches the principle of Christian liberty with regard to the day for the church's corporate worship gatherings.

In light of the above emphases, the problem with the various legalistic sabbatarian views is their tendency to take the ceremonial provisions of the Decalogue literally (i.e., repristination to the Old Covenant) at the cost of depreciating Christ as the fulfillment of the sabbath. This paper presents an antidote to sabbatarianism, namely the New Testament teaching of Christ as the fulfillment of the sabbath. A corollary to this idea is the matter of Christian freedom regarding the day for worship. The principle of Christian liberty in such matters is neglected by legalistic sabbatarians. It needs to be said that Christ did not directly abolish the sabbath. He fulfilled it. Observance of a particular day is not satisfactory in the Christian era, as this study demonstrates.

The Method

The method for presenting this "fulfillment view" of the sabbath is as follows. First, the New Testament is searched for all references to worship gatherings, seeking information about the day for the corporate worship gatherings of the Christian church. Secondly, the nature of worship inaugurated by Jesus for the New Age is investigated along with explications from other passages of the New Testament. Thirdly, the attitude to and teachings about "sabbath and days" as a kind of *Folgerungen* ("deductions") resulting from the nature of worship outlined for the New Age are appreciated and understood. The sabbath healing ministry of Christ, His sabbath teachings and related Christological claims, and other passages declaring principles of Christian liberty in ceremonial matters are examined. Finally, a very brief historical sketch demonstrates that Sunday gradually emerged as the day of Christian worship on the basis of the principle of Christian freedom.

The following studies have been used in this paper because they are particularly helpful in representing various major theological directions relative to this topic. Samuele Bacchiocchi wrote his From Sabbath to Sunday⁹ as a doctoral dissertation for Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University, although he is a Seventh-Day Adventist. He argues that

because Palestinian Christianity continued to keep the sabbath, the Bible is silent on the transfer from Saturday to Sunday observance and therefore the shift to Sunday observance must have occurred at a later date. It is a requirement of the moral law to observe a specific day, Saturday, for worship and restful activities. Secondly, the change occurred primarily through Roman pressure upon Semitism, from which the Christians desired to be differentiated. Thirdly, the successful substitution of Sunday for Saturday can be explained by the primacy of the church of Rome and through the influence of the sun-cults. His study is replete with exegetical and historical information that often is very sound, though heavily weighted with his seventh-day presuppositions.

R. T. Beckwith and W. Stott authored their This is the Day¹⁰ to assert that Christ's resurrection effected a legitimate shift from sabbath observance to the Christian Sunday. They view the sabbath as a creation ordinance binding for all time because it is witnessed by the Decalogue and therefore must be observed strictly by both worship and rest on Sunday in the New Age. They deny that a church (i.e., Rome) began Sunday observance since the literal sabbath was already abrogated by Christ Who replaced it with Sunday. Their strongest

argumentation derives from the Apostolic Fathers and post-Biblical historical data.

Willy Rordorf's Sunday¹¹ argues that Sunday is not to be a day of rest in the New Age but a day of worship inaugurated by the resurrection when Christ immediately abrogated the Old Testament sabbath. This student of Oscar Cullmann tends to twist the evidence to fit his thesis, and the study comes largely from a critical point of view.

A massive compilation of twelve monographs, edited by D. A. Carson¹² and written by several doctoral and post-doctoral scholars at Cambridge in 1973, presents an exhaustive number of perceptive exegetical and theological ideas: the Biblical sabbath originated not with creation but with the Israelites; the sabbath was for their good and became the basis of humanitarianism in Israel; later in Judaism sabbath practices deteriorated to mere restrictions; Jesus is the fulfillment of the sabbath; the sabbath was maintained only primarily among Jewish Christians in the early church; the promised age of rest has come; early Sunday worship was not perceived as a Christian sabbath; and it was not until the fourth century that Sunday sabbatarianism began. The book suffers from being primarily an analysis of other views. However, this collection of essays is the most compatible with conclusions reached in this study.

The Scope

This study is confined to the exegetical department, although in the broader view it needs to be expanded and tested by application to systematic, historical, and practical theology. Furthermore, the primary effort will be to see afresh what the New Testament teaches regarding the fulfillment of Old Testament teachings on the sabbath. Subsequent study in the future could explore Old Testament teachings on such matters as sabbath and days, type and fulfillments, the place and value of ceremonial provisions in both testaments, or analyses of differences between work and rest with regard to the sabbath. Additional study could also profitably expand upon the post-Biblical historical development of the gradual emergence of Sunday.

This paper is not meant to disparage civil Sunday privileges, which are very useful for the corporate worship gatherings of Christians congregations today. The interest is simply to show that present day worship customs are not directly dependent on the Bible. In the Bible we learn that to know and worship God in Christ is the important thing, not that a particular day needs to be followed obediently. This exegetical paper is designed to show that the sabbath only pointed to Christ.

ENDNOTES

¹F[rederick] E. Mayer, Religious Bodies of America (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), 437-40.

²James P. Wesberry, ed., The Lord's Day (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1986).

³Mayer, 146.

⁴Theodore Tappert, Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, and Arthur C. Piepkorn, eds., The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 86 (hereafter Tappert); and Hans Lietzmann, Heinrich Bornkamm, Hans Volz, and Ernst Wolf, eds., Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 126 (hereafter Bek. Schr.).

⁵Tappert, 86; Bek. Schr., 126.

⁶Tappert, 89; Bek. Schr., 129.

⁷Tappert, 91; Bek. Schr., 130.

⁸Tappert, 92; Bek. Schr., 130. The German reads, *wie wohl nicht . . . dennoch schier als viel als . . .*; the Latin, *non quidem . . . sed quasi*.

⁹Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977; repr., 1985).

¹⁰Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, This Is the Day: The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in Its Jewish and Early Christian Setting (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1978).

¹¹Willy Rordorf, Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church, trans. A. A. K. Graham (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968).

¹²D. A. Carson, ed., From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

CHAPTER II

NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE FOR CORPORATE WORSHIP GATHERINGS

The New Testament testifies to the existence of various days for the Christians' corporate worship gatherings. No practice of the Early Church, as evidenced by the New Testament canon, points to a specific day.

The Practice of the New Testament Church

The Book of Acts

The Book of Acts, the history book of the developing Christian church, testifies to a variety of worship practices. Some Old Testament cultic practices such as sabbath observances¹ and attendance at the temple or synagogue apparently were carried over into the post-Pentecost Christian church.² New Testament associations with the Old Testament Jewish cultus are mentioned in several passages. For example, Acts 2:46 describes the worship practice of the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem as marked by believers regularly frequenting the temple: "And day by day, attending the temple together" Acts 3:1 states that Peter and John "were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour," as if this were habitual (note the Greek imperfect

tense, implying repeated action, ἀνεβαίνων). When he was at Philippi (20:6), before traveling on to Troas, Paul observed the Old Testament days of Unleavened Bread prescribed for Israel. Luke reports Paul's attendance at the temple in Jerusalem (24:11), adding that his detractors did not "find him disputing" with anyone (for apologetic or evangelistic purposes; 24:12). Rather, he was at the temple to fulfill a vow for purification (24:18). Apollos also began his ministry at the Corinthian synagogue (18:26). This evidence leads to the conclusion that the Apostles did not avoid Jewish worship practices.

Examples of Places

Numerous examples can be cited from the Book of Acts which show that Jewish places were frequented by the Apostles. Jewish places of worship are specifically mentioned in these references: 2:46 (the believers met at the temple daily); 3:1 (Peter and John met at Solomon's Portico at the temple); 5:20-21 (God directed the Apostles after their arrest and release from jail by an angel to "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life"); and 5:42 (they met "every day" in the temple, teaching and preaching). After his conversion Paul frequented the synagogues of Damascus and proclaimed Jesus (9:20). He also

regularly (κατὰ δὲ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 17:2) went to Jewish synagogues as part of his missionary tours: 13:5 (he used the synagogue at Salamis); 14:1 (he entered the synagogue at Iconium); 17:1-2 (he utilized the synagogue at Thessalonica); 17:10 (daily he employed the synagogue at Berea); 17:16 (Athens); 19:19,26 (Ephesus); 19:8 (Corinth). Christians' attendance is presupposed in the synagogues mentioned at 22:19 and 26:11. The reasonable assumption is that in many cases this Christian usage of a Jewish place of worship suggests their observing the prescribed Jewish day for worship, the sabbath. However, at least in the case of Paul, the choice of the synagogue most probably involves evangelization strategy rather than demonstration of the Christians' sharing with Jews the same day for worship.

Sabbath Days

Other citations specifically indicate that the Christians favorably regarded the sabbath day. Paul preached on the sabbath at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14). Notice that this practice continued regularly for a while: "As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next sabbath" (13:42). Nearly the whole city gathered on the next sabbath (13:44). Paul preached at Philippi on the sabbath (16:13), taught at Thessalonica for three sabbaths

(17:2), and at Corinth he argued and persuaded "every sabbath" (18:4). Virtually all these examples imply utilization of the Jewish sabbath day for evangelistic purposes. However, there is no direct indication that these Christians of the early Apostolic Age utilized the sabbath day for their own separate and distinct worship services.

The presumption is that the regular synagogue gatherings of the Jews on their sabbath days in many cases facilitated the work of Christian evangelism. Obviously, it was to the Apostles' advantage to meet in places where Jewish audiences and potential converts could be found. This rationale for the Apostles' frequenting the places and days of Jewish worship is given typical expression by A. Schlatter:

. . . their primary concern was to proclaim the Christ to the Jewish people as their salvation from destruction. Anything which proved their association with the ordinances and promises of the Ancient Israel assisted the first Christians in this task.³

Independent Gatherings

Evidence can also be presented which demonstrates how believers gathered independently of Judaism for their own worship. Acts 1:14 describes the Ascension Day gathering of 120 believers in the upper room. They again gathered on the Day of Pentecost (2:1). Their gatherings for worship and fellowship continued (2:42), and they regularly engaged in

the breaking of bread and partaking of food in common (2:46, καθ' ἡμέραν . . . κλῶντές τε κατ' οἶκον ἄρτον, μετελάμβανον τροφῆς).

Other references attest to additional, independent gatherings : 4:31; 5:32; 12:12 (house of Mary, mother of John Mark); 18:7 (house of Titius Justus in Corinth). The Christian "church" (ἐκκλησία), as distinct from Judaism, is mentioned as being at Jerusalem (8:1; 11:22; 15:4,22), at Antioch (11:26; 13:1; 14:27; 15:3), at Corinth (18:7), at Ephesus (19:30; 20:17), at Caesarea (18:22), at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (11:23; 16:5), and in Syria and Cilicia (15:41). The church gathered at Troas "to break bread" (20:7-12). No particular or definite day of the week is reported for these independent Christian worship gatherings.

Daily worship gatherings are mentioned in 2:46 (καθ' ἡμέραν), 5:42 (πᾶσάν τε ἡμέραν), and 19:9 (καθ' ἡμέραν, although the exact time of the day is a matter of dispute). Whether every believer who was associated with a particular "congregation" (e.g. 5:11; 8:1, et al.) met every day, or whether the "house fellowships" (2:46 and 5:42, κατ' οἶκον) met every day, cannot be known.

Worship gatherings may have been held daily for whoever was able to be present. In some cases, especially as suggested by Acts 2:46 and 20:7, the Lord's Supper was observed

along with a fellowship/agape meal, which may have been a common feature of Christian worship gatherings (1 Cor. 11:20-21). That no specific information is provided regarding a special day for worship among these Christians leads to the conclusion that no clear mandate was given to the New Testament church regarding the day for gathering for corporate worship. Therefore, worship gatherings may have occurred on any and every day. No one day was preeminently singled out for worship gatherings. A diversity of practices is evident in the Apostolic Church according to the Book of Acts.

It is helpful to understand that Luke explains the separation of Christian worship from Judaism on the basis of the unique character of Christianity as distinct from Judaism. Luke mentions the following examples of tension and hostility caused by Jews prevailing against Christians in Acts: 2:15; 4:2; 5:17 (Sadducees caused Peter's arrest); 7:58 (Stephen stoned); 12:2 (Herod's execution of James pleased the Jews); 13:45; 16:3 (Timothy circumcised because of the Jews); 16:20 (Paul and Silas wrongfully charged of being Jews and advocating violence); 17:5-9,13; 18:6 ("from now on I [Paul] will go to the Gentiles"); 18:12,28; 19:9 (at Ephesus Paul rented the hall of Tyrannus after losing his welcome at the synagogue⁴); 19:14-17,33; 20:3; 21:11,27; 23:12; 24:5 (the high priest solicits Felix's help against Paul who was considered

by the Jews to be an agitator); 25:8-11; and 26:17,21. An initial differentiation between Christians and Jews became necessary both because of the nature of the New Age (e.g. acceptance of the Messiah, the unique meal of the Lord and subsequently because of the Jews' rejection of Christian activity in their midst.⁵ However, no specific evidence can be documented from the Book of Acts indicating that in their separation from Judaism the Christians gravitated to a particular day of the week for their worship gatherings.

Other Passages Outside the Book of Acts

No specific evidence can be documented outside the Book of Acts showing that any particular day of worship was observed among Christians. The word *συναγωγή*, used in James 2:2, probably refers either to the meeting place or to the gathering of the believers. The use of that word suggests that the worship practices of the Christian assembly conformed to the Jewish practice of calling the meeting place a synagogue and therefore of the possibility of Christians meeting on the sabbath like the Jews.⁶ The choice of the word "synagogue" designating a Christian assembly is unusual in the New Testament and might suggest that Jewish cultic practices were retained in the Christian church.⁷ A compound word is employed in 2 Thess. 2:1 (*ἐκ συναγωγῆς*) perhaps referring

more to an eschatological gathering of the community of believers at the Second Advent of Christ than of the church specifically gathered for worship. But that same word is used in Heb. 10:25 in a context that more forcefully suggests a congregation that is gathered for liturgical worship. W. Manson speaks of a "Christian appendage to the Jewish synagogue" as his way of explaining the use of this term otherwise infrequently applied to the Christian church.⁸ There were connections between the church and synagogue in respect to liturgy, such as the fact of gathering together for corporate worship and the employment of a similar nomenclature describing their places of worship. Yet those similarities do not themselves establish that Christians often and consistently continued worshipping on the sabbath as did their Jewish counterparts.

Elsewhere the church is said to meet in houses. Rom. 16:4-5 refers to churches of the Gentiles (αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἔθνῶν). A church meeting in the house of Priscilla and Aquila is given a special greeting (τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν ἀσπάσασθε). House churches are likewise mentioned in 1 Cor. 16:19, Col. 4:15, and Philemon 2. This evidence may suggest that Gentiles often met in houses rather than synagogues; however, no conclusion can be made regarding the selection of a particular day for these worship gatherings.

Rev. 1:10 refers to a day for John that is called the "Lord's Day." Insofar as this may be a witness to an emerging practice of worshipping on Sunday, this passage is mentioned here. Likewise, the first day of the week receives prominence in 1 Cor. 16:2, which could attest to Sunday observance.⁹

No New Testament Passage Mandates
a Specific Day of Worship

Three Traditional Passages

Although a variety of worship practices is exemplified in the New Testament, there are three verses which are often understood as clear evidence of Sunday observance (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). These passages need to be scrutinized closely to determine whether or not they testify to a mandate for a Sunday worship-gathering for the Christian church.

Acts 20:7

The first important passage for investigation is in Acts 20. In this passage, a reference is made to a worship service begun on the "first day of the week."¹⁰ Luke reports in this famous "we-passage" (20:4-15) that Paul traveled to Troas where he stayed for seven days.¹¹ The text states in verse 7: "On the first day of the week (ἐν δὲ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν

σαββάτων), when we were gathered together (συνηγμένων) to break bread (κλάσαι ἄρτον), Paul talked with them intending to depart on the morrow (τῇ ἐπαύριον); and he prolonged his speech until midnight (μεσονυκτίου)." After the episode of Eutychus' fall from the window of the lighted chamber, the account continues: "And when he [Paul] had gone up and broken bread (κλάσας τον ἄρτον) and eaten (γευσάμενος), he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak (αὐγῆς) and so departed" (verse 11).

Which day or night was meant? Does Acts 20:7 attest to Sunday observance on the basis of the phrase, "the first day of the week," as a fixed formula for a day of worship in the New Testament church? The text is unclear as to which day is meant. It is difficult to appreciate that Acts 20:7 really does attest to Sunday worship for the Apostolic church because of the obscure meaning of the phrase, "the first day of the week." If Luke had used Roman reckoning of time, he would be inferring that Paul met Sunday evening (the first day of the week starting at Midnight),¹² while according to Jewish reckoning, he would be referring to Saturday evening, that is, after the sundown of the sabbath when the new week began.¹³

In support of Luke's employment of Jewish reckoning (sundown to next sundown) one takes note of the fact that Luke was quite aware of the Jewish calendar: "It was the day

of Preparation [Friday], and the sabbath was beginning (ἐπέφωσκεν)" (Luke 23:54). Further, Luke alludes to the Jewish liturgical calendar in connection with the "days of Unleavened Bread" (Acts 12:3-4, 20:6; Luke 22:1,7). He is also aware of Pentecost (Acts 2:1; 20:16). Yet on the other hand, there is no certainty that Luke does not use Roman computation of time from midnight to the next midnight) when writing to Gentiles (viz. Theophilus, Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) even though presupposing the Jewish seven day weekly cycle. That Luke might be using the Roman day is supported by an interpretation of ἐπαύριον¹⁴ as meaning that Paul intended to depart "tomorrow morning,"¹⁵ which would be the dawn of a new day past midnight (Monday morning), that is, the day after the Sunday, the first day of the week. If Luke were following Jewish reckoning, ἐπαύριον would be translated "on the next morning."¹⁶ Whether the gathering was the Saturday evening (Jewish) or Sunday evening (Roman), the text indisputably calls it the "first day of the week." It is described as distinct from the sabbath. But, this standard phrase identifying the first day of the week does not in any way designate Sunday as any kind of special day of worship. Because of ambiguities associated with the time of this worship gathering, the reasonable conclusion is that Luke was not neces-

sarily endorsing Sunday as the regular day for worship, normative for Christians of all generations.

Furthermore, from the context this worship gathering on the first day of the week does not appear to be normative of regular Sunday observance. In particular, the gathering must have been a farewell gathering organized only for the express purpose of "breaking bread" with Paul, who intended to leave the next morning since he "prolonged his speech until midnight" (20:7) and then after taking some nourishment, "conversed with them a long while, until daybreak" (20:11). The manner, purpose, and time of this gathering seem to be special rather than ordinary.¹⁷ For example, in verse 7 Paul prolonged his speech (παρέτανέν τε τὸν λόγον). This indicates that this meeting was extraordinarily long by the standards in vogue in the regular Christian worship gatherings at that time. The unusual length of the gathering is confirmed by the report of Eutychus' sleepiness and accidental death by falling from the window. In addition, the Troasian gathering included at least these personages: Sopater of Beroea; Aristarchus and Secundus, the Thessalonians; Gaius of Derbe; Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus, the Asians (20:4). Thus this gathering held the evening before Paul's departure was quite unusual as to the guests present, the extraordinary length, and its purpose of "breaking bread" with one another

at a farewell meeting. Nothing about the gathering appears prescriptive of regular Sunday observance.

The passage, however, does testify to a Christian differentiation from Jewish sabbath observance (20:7a). The arrangements for this meeting were outside the context of Judaism. The upper chamber (20:8) probably was not a synagogue, and certainly the meeting was not for the evangelism of the Jewish community but, as already seen, was for the purpose of a farewell assembly with Paul. It was indeed scheduled at a time distinct from the sabbath (first day of the week). At daybreak, Paul departed (20:11b).

A diversity of practices for the day and the time of worship gatherings has already been seen from the Book of Acts in the Apostolic Church. Any local circumstances (such as the farewell assembly described above) may have dictated the selection of those days and times.

1 Corinthians 16:2

Another reference used to defend the Apostolic origin of Sunday observance is 1 Cor. 16:2. Paul directed (διέταξα) regarding the collection (περὶ δὲ τῆς λογιείας)¹⁸ that "On the first day of the week (κατὰ μίαν σαββάτου),¹⁹ each of you is to put something aside (παρ' ἑαυτῷ), and store it up (θησαυρίζων), as he may prosper (ὅτι ἐὰν εὐοδῶται),²⁰ so that contributions

need not be made when I come." This general collection was being gathered from Gentile areas for the relief of the poor in Jerusalem. Paul had earlier experience in forwarding funds from Antioch to Jerusalem for the Judeans (Acts 11:28-30). This particular widespread offering is mentioned in connection with the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:1), the Achaians (2 Cor. 9:2), the Galatians (Gal. 2:10); and it is mentioned in Rom. 15:24-26.

It has been observed that several features about the collection of offerings are set in a liturgical milieu.²¹ For example, words unmistakably cultic are used in connection with the offering: 2 Cor. 9:12 (ἡ διακονία τῆς λειτουργίας . . . εὐχαριστιῶν τῷ θεῷ), at 2 Cor. 8:4 (τὴν κοινωνίαν τῆς διακονίας), and Acts 24:17 (ἐλεημοσύνας . . . καὶ προσφοράς), passages all discussing the collection. It would not be improper to connect the offering with ideas associated with "worship" though not necessarily with the worship gathering.²²

In pursuit of the question whether 1 Cor. 16:2 implies that a worship gathering might be associated with the offering on a Sunday, some commentators think that the most likely factor which encouraged Paul to distinguish "Sunday" as the day for collecting the money is because of a regular Sunday worship service.²³ The weekly gathering would encourage a weekly offering, which would be an act of worship. Hans

Conzelmann makes the interesting point that if the "saving" of offerings is to be at home, this would imply the existence of a Sunday service to which this special collection should not be brought:

Auch wenn die Sammlung nicht während der Gemeindeversammlung erfolgt, wird man aus dieser Datumsangabe erschliessen dürfen, daß der Sonntag bereits der Versammlungstag ist. Warum dieser Tag gewählt wurde, ist nicht zu erkennen.²⁴

That the Corinthians were to lay aside their offerings "at home" ($\pi\alpha\rho'$ $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}$) is taken by other commentators to mean that there was no Sunday worship assembly to which to take the money. Therefore, other reasons compelled them to leave the money at home.²⁵ A sampling of usages from Moulton and Geden's concordance leads us to conclude that $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$ with the dative case probably should be translated "with," especially in regard to location.²⁶ The implication is that the collecting should be done privately, personally, and even deposited at home.²⁷ Therefore, even though the offering is set within a framework of liturgical vocabulary, it would not be intended as a part of public worship. There is no mention of Sunday worship. Therefore, Paul's advice to collect the money weekly, on Sunday, does not necessarily allude to Sunday observance among the Corinthian Christians.²⁸ Accordingly, the first day of the week must have been selected for

some other pragmatic reason, perhaps in the interest of sound financial practices.²⁹

Because of its ambiguities, 1 Cor. 16:2 cannot be taken as supportive of regular Sunday worship gatherings. It speaks directly of a special collection of money, not of a day for regular worship gatherings.

Revelation 1:10

A third commonly cited New Testament reference to Sunday as being a day for worship in the New Testament is Rev. 1:10a. The Seer John says, "I was in the Spirit³⁰ on the Lord's Day (ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ)" ³¹ Four interpretations are possible. The Lord's day could be (1) Saturday, (2) Sunday,³² (3) Easter Sunday,³³ or (4) the eschatological "Day of the Lord."³⁴ The problem is that the word is a *dis legomena*, occurring only here and in 1 Cor. 11:20. The word may be an adjectival formation,³⁵ but does it mean Sunday?³⁶

The use of the term κυριακή makes an unmistakable connection with the Lord Jesus.³⁷ The idea of sovereignty might be linked to the term because of the resurrected Christ's lordship, who is worthy of weekly worship. Thus, R. J. Bauckman associates "Lord's Day" with a conception of an "Emperor's Day":³⁸

If it is correct to suppose that for John the conflict of sovereignties was especially manifest in persecution provoked by the imperial cult, then there may be deliberate contrast with the monthly "Emperor's Day" (Σεβαστή). On that day the beast-worshipers acknowledge the Lord who is coming as "ruler of the kings of the earth" (even Domitian).³⁹

The majority of commentators presuppose that Rev. 1:10 refers to a special day of worship among Christians in Asia Minor and, because of the nature of the references to the Lord, assume the day to be Sunday.⁴⁰ For them, the "Day of the Lord" in Rev. 1:10 would be viewed as setting a precedent for Sunday observance. John's "I was" of 1:10 would refer to a real time (Sunday), just as in verse 9 it refers to a physical place (Patmos). The Lord's Day would be viewed as an early practice beginning to emerge as a worship day among Christians.⁴¹ Even granting its seminal influence on later centuries, one cannot conclude from this passage that Sunday observance was consistently in vogue as the day of worship, nor was it meant to be normative as the day of worship by the time of John.⁴² For that matter, if the day of worship among early Christians were termed the "Lord's Day," that day could have been equally either Saturday or Sunday, or any other selected day for gathering to worship the Lord Jesus.

Rev. 1:10 is sometimes viewed as referring to Easter. K. A. Strand assumes that the Christian community observed the annual Lord's Day before a weekly Lord's Day ever

developed.⁴³ He strengthens his argument by pointing out that there is little evidence for Sunday observance in the New Testament and that the Passover was annual and not weekly.⁴⁴ Yet these speculative arguments do not prove that an annual Christian Passover gave birth to a weekly Sunday that emphasized themes associated with Passover.⁴⁵ An association of Rev. 1:10 with Easter is possible but unlikely.⁴⁶

It remains to examine the claim that Rev. 1:10 suggests the eschatological day of the Lord, *Yom Yahweh*. The context surrounding Rev. 1:10 contains eschatological references.

So, S. Bacchiocchi advocates viewing Rev. 1:10 as the eschatological day of the Lord for the following reasons: Christ is portrayed as One coming with clouds (Rev. 1:7); He will hold the keys and be attended with apocalyptic features (1:12-18); and He will harvest with a sickle (14:4-5).

Samuele Bacchiocchi suggests that the apocalyptic setting of the book shows that "John felt himself transported by the Spirit to the future glorious day of the Lord."⁴⁷ John may have used *κυριακή* for stylistic variety instead of the more usual *ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου*.⁴⁸ The adjective, *κυριακή*, is viewed by Bacchiocchi as emerging in use by the end of the first century and is comparable to other variations in the designation of the day of Christ's coming (e.g. Rev. 6:17; 16:14).

Bacchiocchi surmises: "Considering the predominant place

which 'the day of the Lord' occupies in the thinking and life of the early Christians. . . , it would seem natural that John would . . . be taken in vision to that very day (1:10)."⁴⁹ Further, ἐγενόμην in 1:10 and 4:2 means "became" more than "I was." Bacchiocchi argues, "Since the verb denotes the ecstatic condition into which the Seer was brought by the Spirit, we would expect the 'Lord's Day' to represent not the time but the content of what he saw."⁵⁰

Such support for the phrase "The Lord's Day" as the *Parousia* warrant consideration.⁵¹ However, even if the term is indeed viewed eschatologically, an actual day in the life of John (ἡμέρα) is spoken of (verse 10), just as in verse 9 an actual location is named (Patmos). Further, the term "Day of the Lord" does not present a total description of the Book of Revelation. Verses 6:17 and 16:14 may refer to the Day of the Lord. But, the letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 are not part of the vision of the future.

The above considerations lead to the conclusion that Rev. 1:10 does not witness unequivocally to the idea of the institution of a certain, particular day (Sunday) for the worship gathering of the New Testament church. The phrase does provide an awareness of Christian worship as being directed to and for the sake of the Lord Jesus.

These three passages from the New Testament are commonly accepted as evidence for Sunday worship patterns among the early Christians but they do not, as already seen, have definite mandates attached to them. At most, they serve only as isolated examples of Sunday observance. The value of these citations for Sunday as being a day of worship is weak. No clear commands establish a particular day of worship for believers. In fact, aside from these three examples, we see a diversity and lack of uniformity regarding the day for worship.

The Practice of the Lord's Supper Does Not Establish a Day

A freedom is observed on the question of the day to gather for the Lord's Supper. Conversely, the New Testament practice of the Lord's Supper does not establish Sunday observance. The setting for the Last Supper was the Passover which Christ "earnestly desired to eat before suffering" (Luke 22:15). He invested the Passover meal with new, eschatological meaning by adding that He would "not eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16).⁵²

Frequency

While the Synoptic Gospels do not contain a clear command in the *verba* to repeat the Lord's Supper,⁵³ the Pauline account presupposes repeated celebrations as seen from the words "as often as" (ὡσάκις, 1 Cor. 11:25-26).⁵⁴ It is stated in 1 Cor. 11:26 that "as often as" the Lord's Supper is observed "you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Paul clearly assumed that Christians would come together (*synaxis*)⁵⁵ for worship assemblies which would at times be expressly for the observance of the Lord's Supper.⁵⁶ In the absence of a clear mandate as to when, where, how often, or on what day to observe the Lord's Supper, one can conclude a freedom of practice being intended. Practically speaking, it would seem that perhaps the earliest Christians followed the pattern of one day for worship in a Jewish seven-day week.⁵⁷ However, a concession that a weekly pattern of scheduled worship assemblies may have developed in the early church does not imply that such a pattern resulted from directives as to when to observe the Lord's Supper.

It appears that the earliest Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper frequently (Acts 2:42,46). The believers were diligent in liturgic worship: teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers (verse 42). The use of ἡ κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου as a possible fixed technical term for the Lord's

Supper⁵⁸ is supported by similar phrases elsewhere: Matt. 26:26, Mark 14:22, and Luke 22:19 (λαβὼν . . . ἄρτον . . . ἔκλασεν); 1 Cor. 11:24 (ἔλαβεν ἄρτον . . . ἔκλασεν); and 1 Cor. 10:16 (τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν). These communion services were often in the homes of believers, since such ceremonies would be inappropriate or disallowed in the temple (Acts 2:46a).⁵⁹ The Jerusalem church probably observed the Lord's Supper "daily" (2:46, καθ' ἡμέραν; cf. also the implication of καθ' ἡμέραν in verse 47). Evidently the early Christians did observe the Lord's Supper frequently.

The Agape Meal and Lord's Supper at Troas

Acts 2:46b also states that common meals were associated with the Lord's Supper. This conclusion is based on the choice and use of words associated with expressing the way people naturally eat (i.e., "partaking of food", μετελαμβάνον τροφῆς).⁶⁰ This table fellowship of some early Christians must have been a widespread practice (see 1 Cor. 11:21-23 and 33-34). It appears that terminology associated with "breaking of bread in the home" (κλῶντές τε κατ' οἶκον ἄρτον) does refer to the Lord's Supper, often in the context of a fellowship meal (μετελάμβανον τροφῆς).

It is possible that Acts 20:7 and 20:11 testify to an agape meal in connection with the Lord's Supper at Troas.

The purpose of the meeting was to break bread (v. 7). If this fellowship dinner of Paul with the congregation excluded the Lord's Supper, why would two different terms be used (20:11, κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον καὶ γευσάμενος)? That the phrase "breaking of bread" in 20:11 refers only to normal taking of food or bread before the eating (γεύομαι) hardly seems possible.⁶¹ The use of two different terms deliberately shows that there were both the Lord's Supper and regular eating of food. Given the fact that normal eating took place that evening in Troas, as well as the "breaking of bread," it seems acceptable to consider that Luke describes a fellowship meal which included the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7,11). This stock phrase for the Lord's Supper, the "breaking of bread," does not speak, however, to the issue of mandating the frequency of celebrating the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is mentioned at Acts 20:7 as being observed in Troas on the first day of the week but without any explicit command that it should be continued on a weekly or regular basis. The agape meal and the Lord's Supper were occasioned by the situation of bidding Paul farewell that evening.

The agape meal may or may not have been weekly in early Christianity. However, the preference of Sunday for the Christians' worship gatherings cannot be demonstrated by when

or how often the agape meal was scheduled, since the texts do not provide such information.

Lord's Day

A presumed stock phrase for the Lord's Supper, κυριακὸν δάεινον (1 Cor. 11:20), has been used to argue for Sunday Eucharistic observances.⁶² A common explanation of those who see in this term a veiled interest in Sunday observance is that there is a common linguistic and practical development beginning on Easter evening, the first day of the week, which established the pattern of Sunday Eucharists. The memory of the resurrected Lord Jesus gave the meal its name, and this term associated with the Lord's Supper later developed into the term, "The Lord's Day," first appearing in Rev. 1:10, the day of the week on which the Lord's Supper was held. This position claims that the expression, "Lord's Day," did not derive directly from Easter Sunday but from the Easter meals that came to be held on weekly or annual anniversaries of the resurrection.⁶³

In contrast to that line of thought, is it not possible that the adjective κυριακός, ἡ, ὄν only emphasizes, however strongly, the Lord Jesus whose meal it is? In 1 Cor. 11:20,21 the contrast is clearly between the "Lord's" and "your own" (κυριακὸν δάεινον and ἴδιον δάεινον). Instead of the

more common genitive construction (τοῦ κυρίου), the adjectival form (κυριακόν) is used deliberately in contradistinction to ἴδιον.⁶⁴ In all other cases the genitive construction is used (cf. 11:26, death of the Lord; 11:27, bread and cup of the Lord). A similar symmetrical construction occurs in 10:21 with the contrast between Jesus and the demons, where the genitive is also employed, since no other suitable adjectival word was available for the demons (ποτήριον κυρίου and ποτήριον δαιμονίων). Apparently, κυριακόν and κυρίου are alternate but similar grammatical possibilities. The genitive may have been preferred, but the adjectival formation may have been employed when linguistically more appropriate, as seen in the above examples. The simplest and most straightforward interpretation of κυριακός in 1 Cor. 11:20 is that it was a variant expression for "the Lord's," with the Lord of the meal being emphasized by the term. There does not appear to be a direct line of influence of the meals with the resurrected Lord Jesus which were fondly remembered by the disciples upon the subsequent establishment of weekly eucharists in the primitive church.⁶⁵ The "Lord's Day" of Rev. 1:10 did not arise because of the Lord's Supper being celebrated weekly on that day.

In summary, neither the New Testament institution of the Lord's Supper nor apostolic patterns of observing the

Lord's Supper establish the precedence of Sunday worship gatherings. No direct mandate appears in the accounts of the Lord's Supper which establishes its frequency or the day on which it should be held. It appears that the Lord's Supper was usually in the context of an agape meal in the New Testament. Yet this does not establish a pattern for the day when the Lord's Supper should be held. Rejected is a direct link between the Easter meals of the Lord Jesus and the Lord's meal of 1 Cor 11:20. Also rejected is the contention that these days for the meals directly generated the later term, "Lord's Day."

The Resurrection Accounts Do Not Mandate Sunday Worship

It appears dubious that the early worship observances of the New Testament church directly resulted from the day of the resurrection, although one notices at least some importance being attached to the first day of the week in the resurrection accounts.⁶⁶ However, the resurrection accounts do not explicitly mandate Sunday worship gatherings. Neither the Gospel According to Matthew nor the Gospel According to Mark offer any substantial information. Examined here are the Fourth and Third Gospels, which respectively contain the most information and which are most frequently cited as implying Sunday worship.

John's Gospel

Aside from the early dawn appearance, John describes the appearance of Jesus to the disciples on Easter evening behind "shut doors" (20:10). We do not know what time that was, although on the basis of the use of similar phraseology in the Gospels, one would assume it was late in the afternoon.⁶⁷ Since Thomas was absent, an opportunity for him to examine Jesus personally came one week later (20:26).⁶⁸ The account of Jesus' revealing Himself to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias begins (21:1): "After this . . . again" (Μετὰ ταῦτα . . . πάλιν), suggesting the next kind of event. The phrase could be a veiled expression for (the third) Sunday according to the context. His revealing of Himself to the disciples included sharing fish and bread (21:12,15).⁶⁹

Significantly, John joins these three resurrection appearances by saying, "This was now the third time . . ." (21:14, τοῦτο ἤδη τρίτον) that Jesus was revealed, as if to imply that now for three Sundays in a row after the resurrection Jesus appeared publicly. We are constrained to conjecture that John emphasized the importance of Sunday by the narration of three sequential Sunday appearances. However, notice that the adjective κυριακή is not used to describe Sunday as the Lord's Day, although John was in fact familiar

with that word (Rev. 1:10). It is possible that John emphasized Sunday, but his failure to name it the "Lord's Day" leads us to conclude that Sunday had not yet emerged at this time as the regular day of worship.⁷⁰ Even if John emphasized Sunday, no precedents are given for continuing Sunday observance among Christians.

Luke's Gospel

Among the resurrection accounts in the Synoptic Gospels Luke is the most comprehensive in evidencing an emphasis upon Sunday. After the Easter morning account, Luke describes another resurrection appearance by beginning with the words "That very day . . ." (24:13), referring distinctly to Sunday, the third day after the Friday of 24:7 (see 24:21,46). On that Easter afternoon Jesus "drew near and went with" the two believers enroute to Emmaus (24:15), about seven miles from Jerusalem (24:13), more than a sabbath day's journey. Jesus engaged those two Emmaus disciples in reflection upon the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. Once they arrived, they offered Jesus hospitality: "Stay with us, for it is toward evening (πρὸς ἑσπέραν) and the day is far spent" (24:29). While they reclined for the meal, He took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them (24:30, λαβὼν ἄρτον . . . κλάσας).⁷¹ Their eyes were opened, and

He vanished as their hearts burned. The now glorified Christ next appeared suddenly with the believers in Jerusalem later on that same first day of the week. While hearing the report of the Emmaus discussion and Jesus' revelation from the two travelers who had just returned (24:33), the Eleven, together with others, saw the resurrected Jesus Himself. All these events happened on the first day of the week (24:22,13,21, 29).⁷²

After the Ascension, Luke reports that the believers returned to Jerusalem.⁷³ The mention of their joyful attendance at the temple (24:53) is descriptive of their ardent expression of faith, and it shows that a clear break had not yet been made by them with the Old Order even though Christ is presented as its New Testament fulfillment. In Luke's post-resurrection account we clearly find three themes:

(1) an emphasis on the resurrection day itself, though not on consequent Sundays as in John's Gospel (24:46); (2) an emphasis on Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament (24:27, 44-46); and (3) a missionary urge for the church. This missionary program of expansion is mentioned in 24:47-48 ("... preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."). The Lukan Great Commission emphasizes preaching "repentance and forgiveness of sin" (v. 47) rather than the enforcement of Old

Testament ceremonial laws. Christ is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Covenant which has become obsolete since the resurrection.

Thus far, on the basis of an examination of the resurrection accounts, it has been shown that Christ Himself did not mandate Sunday as a special day for the Gospel Age. Rather, He opened the door to understanding the sabbath in a deeper and fuller way. The Evangelists John and Luke do not mandate Sunday observance in their resurrection accounts, even though they do appear to hint indirectly at the importance of Sunday.

Summary

Does the New Testament enjoin Christians to keep a particular day sanctified for worship? Our review of the worship practices of the church in the New Testament does not reveal any directions for establishing a particular day.

From the examples given in the Bible, especially from the Book of Acts, a diversity is understood. Believers at times respected and often utilized the sabbath and Jewish places of worship. On the other hand, Christians did separate themselves from the Jewish cultus. The three passages in the New Testament which are commonly used to demonstrate Sunday observance do not conclusively show that Christians

had begun universally to worship on the first day of the week. 1 Cor. 16:2 actually does not speak to the issue of Sunday worship gathering. Acts 20:7 probably refers to a special worship service. Rev. 1:10 only speaks of the Lord's Day, a term capable of several different interpretations. These verses taken together carry more weight in support of regular Sunday worship, although no mandates to that effect are given. The evidence demonstrates that for the New Testament Age there is a sense of freedom to depart from sabbath observance, that it is possible that the septenary calendar of Judaism helped establish a later principle of weekly worship for Christians (especially Acts 13:42; 17:2), and that a differentiation from Judaism was necessary.

The institution of the Lord's Supper does not help in establishing a special day for its observance. The Words of Institution do not carry a particular reference to giving directions of when or how often the Lord's Supper should be observed. The early practice of enjoying a fellowship meal in connection with the Lord's Supper does not help to arrive at a conclusion about when Christians should gather for worship. Even if there were a connection seen among the early Christians between the meals joyfully remembered with Jesus and those continued in their Lord's Supper fellowships, one can concede only the tendency among Christians to gravitate

toward the first day of the week for regular worship. No clear New Testament commandment is given in that direction.

The post-resurrection accounts of John and Luke may emphasize Sunday, but no mandates prescribing Sunday observance among Christians are given. In fact, the post-resurrection accounts clearly portray the idea of fulfillment--the Old Testament Age is fulfilled by Christ. Therefore, for the New Age of the Gospel there is greater emphasis upon mission activity and "*kerygmatic preaching*." In the absence of clear Biblical teachings it cannot be concluded that Sunday was early designated as the specific day of worship. Rather, the New Testament Apostolic history suggests that in the interest of separation from Judaism, especially because of the appreciation of Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament laws (including the ceremonial laws like the sabbath) and a growing sense of Christian liberty from ceremonies, the sabbath eventually became obsolete. Worship patterns emerged which allowed the Lord's Supper, the Christians' own unique inheritance, to be scheduled on any day.

ENDNOTES

¹S. G. Wilson states, "As one of the most clearly visible signs of Jewish allegiance, sabbath observance became one of the hallmarks of Judaism in the Hellenistic era. It was one of the features most frequently noted by pagan writers, often for the purpose of ridicule (Juv. Sat. 14:95f; Seneca, quoted by Augustine, *Civ. Dei* VI.10-11), while for Jewish writers it was a mark of great distinction and they were quick to point out that even non-Jews copied their sabbath customs (Jos. Ap. II.282; cf. Suet. *Tiberius* 32). As emphasis upon the significance of the law increased so did scrupulous observance of the sabbath, to the point where it could be seen as the very heart of the law." Luke and the Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 37.

²There are several arguments suggesting why sabbath observance may have continued in the primitive Jewish Christian church: 1. Christianity may have appeared as just another sect (Acts 24:5,14; 28:22). The Sadducees were called that (Acts 5:17), and the Pharisees were likewise viewed as a sect (Acts 15:5; 26:5). Christians followed "the Way," which may have been viewed as a movement within Judaism (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14). 2. Early Jewish hostilities directed against Christians did not cause an initial migration of Christians from the synagogues; attested by the fact that Paul had gone searching for Christians in the synagogues of Damascus (see Acts 9:2; see also 22:19). 3. Early persecutions reported in Acts 6-8 were apparently directed at the Hellenists (a non-conformist group of Jewish Christians) rather than against the whole church. See the illuminating study by Martin Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968). This paper will not deal with Matt. 24:20, which some commentators take to refer to the expectation of Christ for the sabbath to continue. See Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), 69-71.

³Adolf Schlatter, The Church in the New Testament Period (London : SPCK, 1955), 13.

⁴See 1 Cor. 16:9, "and there are many adversaries." This may explain why a new location was needed.

⁵Wolfgang Schrage, ἐπισυναγωγή, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friederich and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-74), 7:848-52. (Hereafter referred to as TDNT) He explains that after the "Shemone Esre" curse was introduced into the liturgies of the synagogues ca. A.D. 90, a definite breach occurred between Judaism and Christianity (p. 850).

⁶Ibid., συναγωγή, 838.

⁷"Without doubt early Christian assemblies were called συναγωγαί, a designation which can be explained quite naturally from the terminological usage of the surrounding 'world.'" Martin Dibelius, James, Hermeneia Series, trans. Michael A. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 133.

⁸William Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), 69.

⁹Acts 20:7 is also often alleged to attest to Sunday worship practice. These three passages are treated at greater length in the next section.

¹⁰Oscar Cullmann explains, "The Lord's Day of the first Christians was therefore a celebration of Christ's resurrection. Each Lord's Day was an Easter Festival, since this was not yet confined to one single Sunday in the year. . . . In the very earliest period, indeed, there is not yet any special name for this day. It is still called 'the first day of week,' according to Jewish system of chronology." Early Christian Worship (London: SCM Press, 1966), 11.

¹¹Luke writes as an eyewitness in the first person plural, hence the "we sections" (16:10-17; 20:4-15; 21:1-18). He gives at least 13 time references to report the stages of Paul's journey (Acts 20:3,6,7,15,16; 21:1,4,5,7,8,10,15,18).

¹²Luke, in describing a Gentile mission in Acts, may have reckoned according to the Roman method from midnight to midnight and would have naturally thought of Sunday evening. Most commentators subscribe to this view. See F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of the Acts (Eerdmans, 1956), 407-8; Paul K. Jewett, The Lord's Day (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 61; Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, This is the

Day (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1978), 28; and R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 825. Willy Rordorf argues for Sunday evening on the basis of a letter from the governor Pliny to the emperor Trajan in A.D. 112. This correspondence speaks of a later, regular Sunday morning pattern for worship gatherings and of the Easter evening appearance of the risen Lord in connection with a meal in the evening. Rordorf presupposes that John 20:19 follows the Roman reckoning for the day. Sunday (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), 200-205. A complete English translation of Pliny's letter appears in F. F. Bruce, New Testament History (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), 423-24.

¹³Advocates of Saturday evening include Bacchiocchi, 103-107. He is at pains to establish Saturday night in his effort to disallow Sunday worship in the New Testament. He goes so far as to grant that, if this worship service were on a Sunday night, this fact would establish Monday worship. Harald Riesenfeld argues that Saturday evening corporate worship gatherings would have been natural in following the sabbath. The Gospel Tradition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 127-31.

¹⁴Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 255. (Hereafter cited as BAG). This adverb is defined as "tomorrow" or the "next day" with ἡμέρα understood.

¹⁵F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., The Beginnings of Christianity, 5 vols. (New York and London: Macmillan & Co. 1920-33), 4:255, claim that ἐπαύριον means the next day after the ἡ μία τῶν σαββάτων, not the next daylight.

¹⁶Bacchiocchi, 103.

¹⁷Ibid., 104, accords the unusually late hour for the Lord's Supper as support that this pericope does not evidence the norm of Sunday worship. The late hour explicitly resulted from Paul's long-windedness (Acts 20:7b, "He prolonged his speech.").

¹⁸Gerhard Kittel, λογεία, TDNT, 4:283. It is a gift, not a tax.

¹⁹An idiomatic expression counting the days of the week. For more information and on the frequent use of the plural for the singular, see BAG, 746.

²⁰A. Robertson and A. Plummer assert, "It is not certain which tense εὐδοῦται is." In the course of their discussion the perfect, a "very rare perf. mid. subjunctive," and a present subjunctive are all mentioned. They go on to say: "In any case, the meaning is that the amount is to be fixed by the giver in proportion to his weekly gains; and there is no dictation as to the right proportion, whether a tenth, or more or less." Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), 385.

²¹See Keith Nickle, The Collection (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1966).

²²Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 6 vols (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1954), 3:484, offer a precedent for alms to be given as a part of sabbath activities: "Auch nach jüdischer Anschauung war es erlaubt, an einem Sabbath Almosen für die Armen festzusetzen."

²³1 Cor. 16:2 has been taken as a witness of the transfer to Sunday of the regular worship gathering of the New Testament Christian church, as typically expressed by Robertson and Plummer, 384.

²⁴Hans Conzelmann, Der erste Brief an die Korinther (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 354.

²⁵Robertson and Plummer, 384, suspect that there was no church treasury and therefore the money had to be set aside at home. They also offer a gnomic rationale for saving the money at home: "Each is to lay something weekly 'in his own house, forming a little hoard, which will become a heavenly treasure.'"

²⁶W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament, revised by H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1967), 751. ΠΑΡΑ' with dative is arranged so that similar pronouns are grouped together:

- Mt 8:10 - with no one (παρ' οὐδενί) have I found such faith
 John 14:23 - and we will make our home with him (παρ' αὐτῷ)
 John 1:29 - and they stayed with him (παρ' αὐτῷ) that day
 Luke 11:37 - A Pharisee asked him to dine with him (παρ' αὐτῷ)
 Luke 9:47 - taking a child he put him by his side (παρ' ἑαυτῷ)
 John 17:5 - Father, glorify Thou me in thy own presence (παρ' ὑμῖν)
 Matt 27:25 - and they argued with one another (παρ' ἑαυτοῖς)
 Rom 11:25 - lest you be wise in your own (παρ' ἑαυτοῖς) conceits
 Acts 18:3 - he stayed with them (παρ' αὐτοῖς)

²⁷Bacchiocchi, 100, states that Paul's proposal was not for the purpose of embracing Sunday worship "but to ensure a substantial, and efficient collection upon his arrival." He points out that Paul's stipulations are that the "offering was to be laid aside periodically ('on the first day of every week'-v.2), personally ('each of you'-v.2), privately ('by himself in store'-v.2) and proportionately ('as he may prosper'-v.2)."

²⁸Ibid., 100-101, emphasizes that no financial transactions would take place on the sabbath. Therefore, "it appears reasonable that Paul should recommend the Christians to plan on the very first day of the week--that is, right after the Sabbath for the special fund-raising contribution, before other priorities might diminish their resources."

²⁹Ibid., 100, suggests that it was a good financial practice to see the money accruing at home. He also implies that Paul, who was familiar with the adjective κυριακός (1 Cor. 11:20), should have called this day κυριακή ἡμέρα. That he did not call it the Lord's Day implies that directions to set the money aside on Sunday was merely a good suggestion financially rather than attestation of a worship norm. Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1927), 369, even speculates that Sunday was "pay day."

³⁰Moulton and Geden, 823. ἐν πνεύματι occurs four times in the Apocalypse: 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 58, argues that the "Spirit" is anarthrous and does not refer to the Holy Spirit.

"This is John's own pneuma." Lenski says John is in a state-of-receiving a vision.

³¹This could be a case of literary or structural apposition:

v. 9, Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης . . .

ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ // τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ

v. 10,

ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι // ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ

³²Robert Henry Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1920), 23; Cullmann, 10, n. 4; Luther Poellet, Revelation (St. Louis: Concordia, 1962), 17; Lenski, Revelation, 58; Robert H. Mounce, Revelation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977); J. Massyngberde Ford, Revelation, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1975), 382; Wilfrid Stott, "A Note on the Word ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ in Rev. I.10," New Testament Studies 12 (1965-66): 70-75; G. B. Caird, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966), 105.

³³Kenneth A. Strand, "Another Look at 'Lord's Day' in the Early Church and in Rev. I.10," New Testament Studies 13 (1966-67): 174-81.

³⁴J. A. Seiss, The Apocalypse (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1900; repr. 1980), 17-18; Bacchiocchi, 111-31.

³⁵Werner Foerster, κυριακός, TDNT, 3:1096, offers this doubtful conjecture: "The adj. as thus applied arose on Greek soil, for there is no corresponding adj. in Semitic. . . . If it is asked, then, why the two words δάπνον and ἡμέρα are combined with the adj. instead of the genitive τοῦ κυρίου, the answer is that this is an indirect relation to the Lord, i.e., as compared with λόγος τοῦ κυρίου, παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου, etc."

³⁶R. J. Bauckham, "The Lord's Day," From Sabbath to Lord's Day, ed D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 227-28. Because of the difficulties of arriving at a meaning for the word in relation to Sunday, nearly all commentators cite second century literature; but such literature does not show that the Lord's Day unambiguously means Sunday.

³⁷Wilfrid Stott, 74: "The meaning then of κυριακός in both instances in the New Testament would be 'the day' and 'the meal' in which Christ is proclaimed as Lord."

³⁸James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963 impression), 364, identifies the word with imperial, as in the "Imperial treasury" and (per Deissmann) asserts that "attention is drawn to the significant use of Σεβαστή as denoting 'Emperor's Day' . . ." The conjecture is offered "that the distinctive title 'Lord's Day' may have been connected with conscious feeling of protest against the cult of the Emperor with its 'Emperor's Day.'" See also Deissmann, 361.

³⁹Bauckham, 244.

⁴⁰No one appears to entertain seriously Saturday/ sabbath as John's "Day of the Lord," although it is in the realm of possibility. There is some evidence that in Quartodeciman areas Christians may have observed the sabbath instead of Sunday. See the review of the Quartodeciman controversy in Bacchiocchi, 198-207.

⁴¹However, the point that Stott makes is typical of those who interpret 1:10 as referring to Sunday: "To sum up, κυριακή ἡμέρα in Rev. i. 10 may be taken to refer to the first day of the week, the Christian Sunday, and not to the Last Day, or to Easter; it gained this title through the strong emphasis put by the early church on the Lordship of Christ, proved by the resurrection and witnessed by the apostles. It was the day of the Lord's Supper. It was a day instituted by Christ and belonging to him, on which Christians looked forward to the Second Coming when he would finally be proclaimed in the fullest sense 'Lord of Lord's.'" Stott, 75.

⁴²Martin H. Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), x, gives the date of A.D. 95.

⁴³Strand, "Another Look," 175, states: "When Jewish background for a Christian annual Easter celebration on Sunday and lack of similar Jewish background for celebration of the weekly Sunday . . . are coupled with New Testament interest in the paschal season and with lack of such prominence for the weekly Sunday . . . , we are readily led to conclude that in the earliest period of Christian history the only

kind of Sunday 'Lord's Day' observed by the Christian community was indeed an annual one, and that the weekly Sunday celebration somehow developed from the annual."

⁴⁴Ibid., 174.

⁴⁵Bauckham, 230-31, concludes: "But second century Christians were divided between those who followed the Roman custom of observing Easter on a Sunday and the Quartodecimans who celebrated Easter on 14 Nisan. In the early second century the churches of the province of Asia were certainly Quartodeciman, and it is very probable that the churches of Syria were too. But it is from these areas that the *Didache*, the *Gospel of Peter* and Ignatius' letter to the *Magnesians* (and also Rev. 1:10) come [documents using the word κυριακή]." He also says, 231: "It is in fact far more likely that it was the already established custom of weekly worship on Sunday which led to the transference of Easter from 14 Nisan to a Sunday." An allusion to the Passover theme is seen in 1 Cor. 5:7-8 where the text specifically refers to Christ's death, "For Christ, our paschal lamb (τὸ πάσχα) has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate (ἐορτάζωμεν) the festival . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Joachim Jeremias, *πάσχα*, *TDNT*, 5:900-903, tries to link the Lord's Supper to the Passover. In footnote 53 he explains that in the early church the resurrection celebration was not an annual feast but was celebrated weekly and that the original Quartodeciman feast accented the Parousia, not the Passion. In our view 1 Cor. 5:7-8 probably does not provide direct motivation either for Sunday observance or for an annual Easter (resurrection) celebration. Instead, it describes the life of the believer in the New Age, as pointed out by R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of First Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 223: "The festival or feast we are to celebrate (ἐορτή) embraces the entire Christian life . . ." He adds on p. 224: "[1 Cor. 5:6-8 is . . .] full of the imagery of the Jewish Easter festival, the Passover. . . . But it would be unsafe to conclude either that the old Jewish festivals were still celebrated in the newly formed Christian congregations, or that corresponding Christian festivals were already celebrated at this early date." We thereby interpret 1 Cor. 5:6-8 not as establishing a precedent for a day in the church year, but spiritually, referring to the whole of Christian life as lived out in worship.

⁴⁶Rordorf, 221, claims that the expression "Lord's Day" did not derive directly from Easter, but from the Easter meal, which he believes came to be held on weekly or annual anniversaries of the resurrection.

⁴⁷Bacchiocchi, 124.

⁴⁸This is standard usage. See Gerhard Delling, ἡμέρα, TDNT, 2:951-53.

⁴⁹Bacchiocchi, 128.

⁵⁰Ibid., 129.

⁵¹Ibid., 127. Stott, 71, offers convincing evidence from Patristic citations that the phrase does not mean the final day of the Lord.

⁵²Matt. 26:18,19; Mark 14:12,16; Luke 22:8,15. There is an undeniable connection between the Last Supper and the death of Christ: a Passover Lamb about to be sacrificed, the blood that was shed (poured) from the cross, and the promise "I shall not drink again. . . ." Paul was aware of the connections between the Last Supper and the death of Christ. Hence he added, "you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). See Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966). For an opposing viewpoint see Hans Lietzmann, Mass and Lord's Supper (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979). Lietzmann argues that the Lord's Supper is not dependent upon a Passover frame of reference but is a new meal standing on its own strength.

⁵³The longer Lukan account does report the Dominical mandate. For a concise but complete analysis, see Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), 173-77. Metzger points out that the weight of evidence appears more convincing for a longer version. Even the longer version, however, does not refer to time (i.e., "as often as").

⁵⁴Repeated worship gatherings, without specified meeting times, for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper are alluded to in 1 Cor. 11:18,20,33,34.

⁵⁵Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes (London: SCM Press, 1965), 119. The assembling of the Chris-

tians is often designated the *synaxis* (*Conventicus Ecclesiasticus*); s.v. Paul K. Jewett, 43. Peter Brunner, Worship in the Name of Jesus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 18, comments: "Beginning with the fourth century, *synaxis* was for some time the prevailing designation for the Eucharist. It is regrettable that this term failed to maintain itself in Christendom. Viewed from the New Testament, it is the designation for the church's worship which not only is most clearly related to the language of the New Testament but also conspicuously does justice to the novelty of character of Christian worship, inasmuch as it stresses no other special content beyond that of the assembling of the people."

⁵⁶1 Cor. 11:33-34.

⁵⁷C. F. D. Moule, Worship in the New Testament (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), 29, offers a common assumption: "Thus, it may certainly be said that the Jewish sabbath provided a strong incentive to the Christians for a weekly Eucharist, although it is impossible to find any secure evidence for it as an invariable practice, still less for any hard and fast rule to this effect. We must be content to say that it is likely enough to have been a weekly practice"

⁵⁸Johannes Behm, TDNT, 3:730, states that "within the context of the Pauline mission, the breaking of bread, which is on the Lord's Day in Ac. 20:7, is a cultic meal, elsewhere described by Paul (1 C. 11:20) as *κυριακὸν δέιπνον*. As we learn from *Did.*, 14,1: *κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου συναχθέντες κλάσατε ἄρτον* and *Ign. Eph.*, 20,2: *συνέρχεσθε . . . ἓνα ἄρτου κλώντες*, the ancient Palestinian term 'breaking of bread' is one of the titles, perhaps the oldest, for the new liturgical meal of fellowship in primitive Christianity, i.e., the Lord's Supper."

⁵⁹House churches are mentioned or presupposed in Acts 1:13, 2:45, 5:42; 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:5 (of Aquila and Priscilla); and Col. 4:15 (of Nympha).

⁶⁰Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, 117: "We see therefore that the celebration of the Eucharist begins with the grace after the meal and therefore follows the meal proper."

⁶¹The same word is used by Luke of "satisfying hunger" (Acts 10:10, 23:14; Luke 14:24).

⁶²Rordorf, Sunday, 221, argues that if the Lord's Supper were normally on Sundays because of the first Easter evening meal, then the same expression for "Lord's" is claimed in Rev. 1:10, ". . . it is probable that the title κυριακή ἡμέρα is derived from the designation κυριακὸν δέιπνον; in other words, it seems probable that the whole day on which this 'Lord's Supper' took place received the title the 'Lord's day.' If this is, in fact, the case (and this conclusion is almost irresistible), we can infer that the Pauline Lord's Supper was celebrated on Sunday, since Sunday would not otherwise have received its title the 'Lord's day.'"

⁶³Ibid., 233: "It must . . . be emphasized that the Easter meal was decidedly more important for the tradition of the primitive community than the memory of Jesus' last meal. The Lord's Supper was celebrated not on Thursday evening but on Sunday evening. From this alteration of the date we conclude that the meeting of the disciples with the risen Lord on Easter evening must have been for them like a second institution of the Lord's Supper. On these grounds alone we must almost believe in the historicity of the Easter meal, since we cannot otherwise satisfactorily explain what caused the meal which was supposed to commemorate the last meeting before Jesus' death to be transposed to the Sunday."

⁶⁴Käsemann, 119-20.

⁶⁵Luke 24:30; John 21:13. Bacchiocchi, 86, criticizes Rordorf's theory: "It is hard to believe that the disciples viewed the Easter evening meal as a 'second institution of the Lord's Supper,' when Luke, the only reporter of the meal, 'makes no mention' . . . of a *fractio panis*.' . . . The disciples, in fact, gave him [i.e., Christ] a piece of broiled fish . . . There is no mention of bread or of wine . . . Only Christ ate."

⁶⁶James W. Leitch, "Lord Also of the Sabbath," Scottish Journal of Theology 19 (1966): 432, suggests that "the future event marked by the Old Testament Sabbath has now taken place, so that the opening statement of the Easter narrative, 'When the Sabbath was past . . .' (Mark 16.1), is not merely an indication of the date, but means also 'past' in the sense of being fulfilled and therewith abolished."

⁶⁷John 20:19 (Sunday afternoon) ούσης οὖν ὀψίας τῆ ἡμέρα
ἐκείνη τῆ μιᾷ σαββατῶν

Mark 15:42 (Friday afternoon) καὶ ἤδη ὀψίας γενομένης, ἐπεὶ
ἦν παρασκευὴ ἣ ἔστιν προσάββατον

Matt. 27:57 (Friday afternoon) ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης

Luke 23:54 (Friday afternoon--Sabbath was dawning) καὶ
ἡμέρα ἦν παρασκευῆς καὶ σάββατον ἐπέφωσκεν.

⁶⁸John 20:26. Was this Sunday or Monday? Generally the phrase is interpreted as being one week later, an octave of days. See, e.g., P. E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 1 (NT):525.

⁶⁹Lietzmann traces the development of the Lord's Supper to two types, the early communal type of the *Didache* without any connection with the death of Christ and rooted in the joyous fellowship meals (much like the Jewish *haburah*, fellowship meals) and the Pauline type linked to the death of Christ. His first type would be associated with Sunday.

⁷⁰Bacchiocchi, 81, points out on the basis of Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses* 70,10, that until A.D. 135 Christians everywhere observed Passover on Nisan 15 irrespective of the day of the week on which it may have fallen. He adds, "If our informer is correct, this would mean that prior to that time, no necessity had been felt to institute a Sunday memorial (whether annual or weekly) to honor the resurrection." He adds, 84, "The very fact that Passover, which later became the annual commemoration of the resurrection held on Easter-Sunday, initially celebrated primarily Christ's passion and was observed by the fixed date of Nisan 15 rather than on Sunday, makes it untenable to claim that Christ's resurrection determined the origin of Sunday worship during the lifetime of the Apostles."

⁷¹Lietzmann, 185: "Hence it is inherently probable that the ceremony in the Pauline churches proceeded likewise (blessing of bread and wine), with the further probability that the last meal of Jesus and his disciples--*haburah*--followed the same lines . . ."

⁷²Frederick W. Danker, Jesus and the New Age (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1974), 253: "The Church, therefore, does not await a revelation of the Lord at some future time in order to validate the credentials of Jesus.

He is validated on the third day and now assumes direction of his new community."

⁷³Only a $\delta\epsilon$ connects the previous narrative with v. 50, the blessing and departure at Bethany. Could Luke have thought the Ascension were on a Sunday? Could he be misrepresenting the facts? He actually does not say the Ascension was on a Sunday, nor does he say "then," as does the RSV (24:50). Rather, he probably is tying the Ascension with the previous accounts reported in his Gospel. Then the theme of the Ascension, among other things, provides for Luke a message of Christ as the Fulfiller of the Old Testament, already earlier announced in Luke 4:16 (cf. the fulfillment themes in 24:24,27,44-46).

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

INAUGURATED BY JESUS

The variety and freedom exhibited by the corporate worship gatherings of the New Testament church are rooted in theological principles inaugurated by the teaching of Jesus concerning the fulfillment of the sabbath and the nature of worship in the New Age.

Jesus and the New Age

Jesus and the Year of Jubilee, Luke 4:16-30

Luke introduces the ministry of Christ by mentioning that Jesus began His public teaching office in the Galilean synagogue of Nazareth.¹ More than just honoring the sabbath by His attendance at worship there, Jesus came to fulfill the sabbath in His own person.² Clearly, Jesus identified Himself with the themes of release and liberty contained in the Isaiah scroll from which He publicly read (Is. 61:1-2; also 58:6).³ Key words in Luke correspond to words used in Old Testament sabbath and Jubilee texts, including these three topics: (1) liberty and release, (2) relief for the poor, captives, the blind, the oppressed, and (3) that now is the

acceptable (Jubilee) year. The Messianic hope of rest and redemption implicit in the Old Testament sabbath and related Jubilee teachings are meant to be good news of joy for believers in the New Age.⁴

Isaiah used themes connected with the sabbath, the Sabbath Year,⁵ and the Year of Jubilee⁶ to announce a future deliverance for God's people. For example, the "Year of the Lord's favor" (Is. 62:2a) is taken by most commentators to refer to the release associated with the Jubilee.⁷ The "poor" is a term expanded to include the afflicted (needy), the brokenhearted, the captives, the prisoner (the bound), the mourners, and those of a faint spirit (Is. 61:1-3). The good news of the Year of Jubilee consisted of a release from bondage and the granting of divine joy by employing these key concepts: "good tidings," "liberty," "opening of prison," and the "Lord's year of favor." The task of proclaiming this Good News is assigned to the "Servant of Yahweh" in Is. 61:1-2. Jesus identified Himself with that prophet (Luke 4:24; cf. Mark 6:4 where Mark's brief parallel report does not lose sight of the fact that Jesus is the prophet).⁸ Luke points out that the prophet's task is εὐαγγελίσασθαι and κηρύξαι . . . ἄφρον (v. 18). The proclamation brings good news for the poor⁹ and the offer of release for the captives (Rom. 16:17;

Col. 4:10; Philemon 23). It gives sight to the blind¹⁰ and liberty for the oppressed.

Finally, reference to the fact that **now** is the acceptable year of the Lord (ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν)¹¹ and the claim that "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled . . ." (v. 21; cf. 2 Cor. 6:2)¹² clearly indicate fulfillment of the Old Testament. The "today" signifies that the Messianic Age had dawned.¹³ By including Jesus' enunciation of such themes Luke is stressing that Christ the Messiah is the fulfillment of Old Testament prototypes. Messianic themes introduced by "Jubilee theology" find their fulfillment in the Savior Who freely gives a sabbath to His people.

Jesus Teaches the Nature of Worship, John 4:23

Jesus announced the coming to an end of Old Testament ceremonial laws in His conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4. Although this woman attempted to defend the way of worship which belonged to her people (4:20), Jesus announced that a New Age was dawning which annuls the old cultus:

Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those

who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:21-24)

Essentially Jesus was indicating that the hour or time (ώρα)¹⁴ when people worship God outside a temple or sanctuary like at Jerusalem and/or Gerizim was already at hand.¹⁵ Christ's earthly appearance now constituted the beginning of a new era. Already the Gospel Age had begun when worshippers may worship anywhere, outside the confines of the ceremonial regulations that prevailed during the Old Testament Age. The true worshippers (ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταί) are those who worship ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. When the Holy Spirit works upon individuals they become living souls, genuine (ἀληθινοί) Christians, able to worship the Father of all nations. Raymond E. Brown clarifies this fundamental doctrine:

God can be worshiped as Father only by those who possess the Spirit that makes them God's children (see Rom viii 15-16), the Spirit by which God begets them from above (John iii 5). This Spirit raises men above the earthly level, the level of flesh, and enables them to worship God properly.¹⁶

The worship praxis of the Christian, his λατρεία--as it is called (Rom. 12:1; cf. Acts 24:14; Heb. 9:14; 12:28), is motivated by the gift of the Messianic Age, the Spirit of God (John 14:16-17; 15:26). Peter Brunner teaches that "to serve God through *latreia* implies that they [Christians] have been transported into the new reality of salvation of the fulfilled Messianic era"17

A worship "in truth" is one that no longer employs the "shadows of things to come" (Col. 2:16) but recognizes that Christ has already come and that the believer has access to the Father through Jesus. Notice that Jesus never denied the temporary validity of the Old Covenant. Rather, He pointed out that "salvation is from the Jews" (v. 22, ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν). Jewish ceremonies were temporary, to be in effect until the salvation to which they pointed would come. In the New Messianic Age it is necessary to worship in spirit and truth (ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν, v. 24) because it is an age of fulfillment.¹⁸ The worship patterns of the Old Testament were typological. Their fulfillment had come in the person of Jesus (John 14:6; 8:45; 18:37). The Christian knows that the old sabbath, for example, pointed to the rest which Christ brought when He came. Now that Christ has come (v. 23, "the hour is coming and now is"), what the Old Testament type prefigured (i.e., rest) has arrived. Now all of life under the blessing of the Savior is sabbath and, therefore, holy time (worship) for God. Christian worship is re-oriented to Christ and not focused on a particular day. Old ceremonial forms such as time (sabbath) or place (Gerizim/Jerusalem temple) become irrelevant in view of the Advent of Christ, Who ushered in a New Age.¹⁹

The spiritual nature of worship for the New Age does not preclude externals contingent upon time and space. These are obviously necessary and/or useful in the created order of existence. Corporate worship gatherings are indeed assumed in the New Testament (see Acts 2:42; 46, et al.). The New Testament requires visible elements that are connected with the sacraments (bread, wine, water). The New Testament does not spiritualize away the concrete facts of faith anchored in the Messiah, Jesus. Therefore, the empirical realities (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ) yield more than mere ethical obedience. Conversely, meaningful λατρεία does not take place just because ceremonial rituals are observed. In the Gospel Era meaning and substance are associated with λατρεία because of divine truth (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ). True worship is produced by the Holy Spirit, and inner Christian life and activity are sustained by the same Spirit while visible, corporate worship is located at some **place**.

Christian freedom regarding a specific day for worship derived from a response to the claims of Jesus (v. 23, καὶ ὧν ἔστιν) as the end goal of the Old Testament law (Rom. 10:4). The nature of Christian worship is oriented to Him instead of being directed to a particular day. The nature of Christian worship is not topological (where shall we worship?) nor

hemerological (on which day shall we worship?) but is Christological (per John 4:21-24).

The Offer of Divine Rest, Matthew 11:28-30

Significantly, the theme of "rest" in Matthew 11 is rooted in the sabbath typology of the Old Testament. For all who need a sabbath ἀνάπαυσις, Jesus has come.²⁰ The famous and comforting invitation of the Savior includes these promises: "Come to me . . . and I will give you rest" (11:28, κἀγὼ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς) and "you will find rest" (11:29, εὐρήσετε ἀναπαυοῖν). Those privileged to receive the joy of redemptive blessings are called babes (11:25), while the wise and understanding (i.e., the Jews; see v. 23) have those truths hidden from them.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (IDB) reviews three possible interpretations of Matt. 11:28-30.²¹ They are summarized as being Christ's offer of refreshment and relief (1) from weariness, (2) from a burden of sins, and/or (3) from the burden of Jewish law as interpreted by the scribes and Pharisees. Surely each view could legitimately be applied to Christ's gracious offer.

The premise that Christ alone is the fulfillment of the sabbath is best supported by the last interpretation (number 3 above) because it contrasts man's need and God's grace.²²

The passage is replete with statements regarding the grace of God, His giving and bestowing attitude. God **revealed** the kingdom (11:25, ἀπεκάλυψας); all things have been **delivered** to Jesus by the Father (11:27, παραδόθη); knowledge of the Father can only come if it is **given** (11:27, ἐὰν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι, "if the Son chooses to reveal"); Christ **gives** rest (11:28, κἀγὼ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς, "I will rest you").²³ God is a God of grace, and rest is one of His gifts. There is no rest except in Christ. R. C. H. Lenski comments on πάντες οἱ κοπιῶντες, explaining the phrase this way: "'All those laboring' (present active participle) are all those who are trying to work out their own salvation" ²⁴ He explicates πεφορτισμένοι in the following manner: "'All those having been loaded down' (perfect passive participle with present implication) are all those who have let others load them down with what the latter [the Jews] will secure salvation."²⁵ The Matthew 11 invitation harmonizes with the ministry of Christ that ushered in a New Age and the gospel offer for the "poor and oppressed" (see John 6:27). The Old Testament sabbath was a symbol of rest; it prefigured a rest that Christ now brought to fulfillment. According to Jesus, personal toil and labor do not lead to rest, but to those following Him, rest is offered.

Supporting the view that Jesus has the burdens of the law in mind is the fact that this section of Matthew has a "wisdom context." A close parallel of Jesus' sayings is in Sirach 51:23-27:

- 23 Draw near to me, you who are untaught
 24 . . . why are your souls very thirsty?
 26 Put your neck under the yoke (ὕπο ζυγόν)
 27 See with your eyes that I have labored little and found myself much rest (ἀνάπαυσιν).

However, in Sirach wisdom is viewed as achievable if one is bound to "instruction." Instruction took the form of learning the commandments of the law (see Prov. 1:2-7 and Proverbs 8). Jesus realized that man could not keep the individual commandments of Pharisaic legalism (Matt. 23:4; Acts 15:10). Jesus invited all to Himself for relief from a legalism that burdens. He is not just the bearer of the wisdom of God but is Himself Wisdom. Sirach invites his audience, "Draw near to me, you who are untaught" (Sir. 51:23). Jesus invites those laboring and heavy laden to come (v. 28). The attainment of the reward, ἀνάπαυσις, in Sirach is based upon works and slavish obedience to the law. In contrast, rest is given as "pure grace" from Jesus. Through Jesus the heavenly Father is inviting people into His kingdom. Because of Jesus, the kingdom of God is coming to those responsive to the invitation that He offers (v. 28)..

Theological Explications of the Nature of Worship
from Other New Testament Sources

Hebrews 3 and 4

The Book of Hebrews shows the absolute supremacy of Christ and how the Old Testament is fulfilled.²⁶ Christ's great promise to give rest (ἀνάπαυσις) to all who "come" to Him (Matt. 11:28) is also the theme of Hebrews 3 and 4 where God's rest is given to His people (κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός).²⁷ The point of Heb. 3:6b-4:13 is that the rest that God promised the Israelites in the Old Testament accounts is typological of the heavenly rest that God promises the believers in the New Testament. The record of Israel's rebellion and punishment in the wilderness is meant for our admonition today (cf. 1 Cor. 10:5-6).

The Peril of Rejecting God's Grace

The Author of Hebrews describes the peril of rejecting God's rest (3:8, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν). In conformity with other encouragements throughout the whole Book of Hebrews, admonitions which encourage perseverance are extended to the believer (3:6b-4:13). For example, the church is living in an age of Messianic fulfillment (1:2; 9:26), although this is not to be consummated until His return (9:28). Meanwhile, the life of believers "is one of hope and struggle, in which they are sustained by the fact

that that for which they strive has already been achieved for them, and that they have already begun to enjoy it."

Believers are viewed as "his house" if we "hold fast our confidence" (Heb. 3:6b; cf. also v. 14). The author urges the readers to "take care (3:12, βλέπετε) . . . lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart." Believers should not fail to reach their goal (4:1), and they are encouraged to strive for entering God's rest (4:11, Σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν). The adverb "today" appears at 3:13,15 as exhortation not to delay but rather to encourage one another (3:13, παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτούς) toward God's offer of rest ("as long as it is today").

The contention of Hebrews is that the Israelites of old had rejected God's offer in the wilderness. Num. 20:2-5 states: "Now there was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves together against Moses and Aaron. And the people contended with Moses" Terms appearing in the Greek New Testament text and Septuagint (LXX) are *παραπικρασμός*, "provocation" or *Meribah* (also called "proof" and "tempting"; see Ex. 17:2,7) and *πειρασμός*, "trial" or *Massah* (also called "contention" and "striving"; see Ex. 17:7). Other examples of Israel's rebellion resulted from the people's rejection of Joshua's and Caleb's favorable report about the prosperous land of Canaan. Therefore, it is

recorded in Num. 14:30, "not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb . . . and Joshua"28 The Israelites' failure to enter God's rest is mentioned also in Deut. 12:9 ("for you have not as yet come to the rest"). The author of Ps. 95 later renewed the exhortation against rejecting God (vv. 7-11). The Author of Hebrews used Psalm 95 (Psalm 94 in LXX) to renew God's warning about the peril of disobedience among Christians. In short, disobedience of faith causes believers to forfeit the benefits of the New Age.

Those who lose the promise are identified as being faithless: they have an "evil, unbelieving (ἀπιστίας) heart" (3:12); they are "disobedient" (3:18, ἀπειθήσασιν); the rebellious generations' "unbelief" (3:19, ἀπιστίαν) is cited; the Gospel among the hearers "did not meet with faith" (4:2, μὴ συγκεκερασμένους τῇ πίστει)²⁹; those in the Old Testament who failed to receive God's rest did so "because of disobedience" (4:6, δι' ἀπειθείαν); Christians can lose God's promise "by the same sort of disobedience" (4:11, τῆς ἀπειθείας). As a result of disobedient faith, people of any generation will lose God's promised rest (3:11-18).

Rest Is God's Gift

The rest of which Hebrews 3 and 4 speaks is God's rest.³⁰ Earthly "rests" are types of heavenly rest. This contrast between earthly and heavenly rest, between type and fulfillment, is clearly enunciated in 4:8-9: "For if Joshua had given them rest (κατέπαυσεν), God would not speak later of another day. So then, there remains a sabbath rest (σαββατισμός) for the people of God." That a rest **remains** suggests that the physical rest for the Israelites in the land of Canaan was not the final rest promised by God.³¹ The rest that God grants is to be understood as an entering into the very rest of God. Note that the present tense (4:3, εἰσερχόμεθα) and ingressive aorist (4:6, εἰσελθεῖν; 4:10, ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθών)³² are used to denote the believers' entrance and present participation in God's creation sabbath rest.³³ God's creation rest is specifically referred to in 4:4³⁴ and 4:10.³⁵ The promise is given that "whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his" (4:10; cf. Rev. 14:13). God's people desist from their own dead works and accept God's work in them by faith (see 13:21; 6:1, μετανοίας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων; and 9:14, ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων).³⁶

Thus far, three arguments have been advanced for the superiority of God's rest: (1) God invites the believer to enjoy His own creation rest. (2) The fact that the

Israelites in the wilderness failed to enjoy the promised land-rest shows that a kind of rest different from land-rest was intended. (3) The fact that the promise was renewed by David (Psalm 95) shows that people are still being invited to God's rest in the future since David's generation already was enjoying the land-rest of Canaan. God's gift of rest has been available since the beginning of creation because this rest (κατάπαυσις) is an entrance into God's seventh day of creation rest (linked with Gen. 2:2).³⁷

A different word (σαββατισμός), which is deliberately employed at Heb. 4:9, is associated with "sabbath observance".³⁸ This "sabbath rest" is to be identified with the New Age.³⁹ The term itself, used only here in the entire New Testament, corresponds to the LXX σαββατίζω (Ex. 16:30; Lev. 23:32; Lev. 26:34-35; 2 Chron. 36:21). This also refers to sabbath observance.⁴⁰ Hebrews 4:9 is suggesting that a sabbath rest is always being extended to God's people (Gospel!). Man enters this rest by ceasing from his own efforts (4:10; cf. John 6:30-31), and this is analogous to God's ceasing from His works (4:4). Man enters God's rest by faith. Thus the believer enters God's present and future promise of rest by faith and by ceasing from his own labors (4:10), just as God ceases from His labors (ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων). The word σαββατισμός defines the promised κατάπαυσις as an entrance into sabbath

celebration. The literal day of rest, the sabbath of the Old Testament, is transformed by Heb. 4:9-10 into a new signification for the New Testament Era.⁴¹ The Gospel of salvation rest through Christ stands in discontinuity with the Old Testament literal sabbath; a literal day of rest is not enjoined upon the New Testament believer.

The Sabbath Rest Is a Gift To Be Received Today

The promise of rest is for "today." Several verses (Heb. 3:13,15; 4:7) allude to the today (σήμερον) of Ps. 95:7, quoted at Heb. 3:7. The possibility of entering God's rest is as alive now as it was at the time of Moses and Joshua as well as in the days of King David (3:13, "Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' . . .").

The "today" is the present offer of God's gift of rest, the Messianic sabbath being announced to the people of the present age. The eschatology of the Book of Hebrews does not suggest a timetable of world history, nor does it fantasize about a future eighth day sabbath (Ogdoad). There is no concern to reestablish a certain day as a preference for corporate worship in the Christian church. The view of Hebrews is that the Old Testament sabbath was fulfilled by Christ.⁴² The

blessings of the sabbath rest of God have arrived with Christ and are available now.

The occurrences of the word "today" before Chapter 4:7 are in a law context (3:7,13,15). In unbelief God's rest was rejected. The "today" is used by the author of Hebrews in a Law way by warning his present generation against the danger of apostatizing. He then quotes the same Psalm of David in a Gospel way by announcing the present day of grace. "Again he sets a certain day, 'Today,' saying through David . . ."

(4:7) The emphasis on "today" is in evidence by quoting from Psalm 95 again. The author of Hebrews uses the words of the Old Testament here to issue the invitation to enter the sabbath rest of God which is present now through Christ. This Gospel word "today" draws attention to the rest that God gives as a gift, being promised "later of another day" (4:8, οὐκ ἂν περὶ ἄλλης ἐλάλει μετὰ ταῦτα ἡμέρας). Lenski notes: "The condition (ἐί with the aorist) is one of past unreality. Living in the Holy Land is not yet entering into God's rest."⁴³ He continues to explain that the apodosis of verse 8 (the imperfect with ἄν) is one of present unreality.⁴⁴ There would be no need of the "present unreality" if, as Lenski puts it,

living in Canaan secured the heavenly rest for every Israelite. So God speaks of another day "in the person of David" to both the Israelites of David's time and to

us who now have this other day of grace. It is the day of Jesus and his salvation.⁴⁵

God's grace did not stop with the disobedience of previous generations, but now in the Gospel Age it is renewed again.

Christian freedom regarding the selection of a specific worship day derived from a response to the identification of Jesus as the end-goal of the Old Testament law and as the One Who ushered in the true sabbath (Σαββατισμός). Sunday is not the fulfillment of the Jewish sabbath; Christ is. Christians do not honor a day, whether the Old Testament sabbath or the present Sunday. Rather, they remember that Christ has ushered in an age of grace, typified for example by the Exodus, which was an earthly day of grace. The rest of Canaan was typological of the rest that Christ brought through His resurrection. Christians live under the "today" of God's grace wrought by Jesus Christ. They enter God's rest now; this promise will yet be brought to consummation eschatologically when they shall enter God's heavenly sabbath (4:10).

Hebrews 8:13

Elsewhere in the book of Hebrews the point is clearly made that the New Testament makes the Old obsolete. For example, Heb. 8:13 states, "In speaking of a new covenant he treats the first as obsolete (πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην). And what is becoming obsolete (τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον) and growing old

(γηράσκον) is ready to vanish away (ἔγγυς ἀφανισμοῦ). The "new thing" (καινήν and τὴν πρώτην) is feminine, whose antecedent is the new covenant of 8:8.⁴⁶ The neuter appears at verse 8:13b instead of feminine in order to state a general truth, namely, that what God is causing to become obsolete (present passive participle) is now (ἔγγυς) happening (γηράσκον, present active; note the verb, "growing old"). God deliberately caused (8:13, πεπαλαίωκεν, perfect active) the old covenant to become obsolete. This statement is made in the context of the quotation from Jeremiah (31:31-34) who prophesied the New Age (quoted in Heb. 8:8-12).

Throughout the Book of Hebrews several comparisons are made between the Old and New Testaments. The superiority of the New Age is emphasized. For example, God spoke through the prophets but now speaks through His Son (1:1-2). The Son is superior to the angels (1:4). The message is delivered by angels (2:2), but Jesus is glorified above the angels (2:9). Moses is a servant in the house (3:2), but then Christ is superior to Moses as a Son in the house. The creation rest of Gen. 2:22, the rest of Canaan as the promised land at the time of Joshua, and the rest offered at the time of David (Psalm 95) are all superseded by God's salvation rest (3:7-4:13). The high priest lacked understanding, but our priest was tempted and is empathetic (4:15). The elementary Old

Testament doctrines are contrasted with the better things (cf. 6:1 & 6:9). The greatness of the priest Melchizedek (7:1-2) is lesser than the greatness of the Son (7:3,4). The Old Testament Levitical Priesthood is contrasted with Jesus the great High Priest (cf. 7:11-23 & 7:24-8:2). The old cultus served as a copy and shadow (8:5, οἵτινες ὑποδείγματα καὶ σκιᾶ λατρεύουσιν) in comparison with the more excellent ministry and the better covenant of Christ (8:6, Νυνὶ δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας, ὅσω καὶ κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης, ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοισιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται.). The author of Hebrews states that the old system cannot perfect the conscience (9:9, τελειῶσαι), although Christ Himself can purify (καθαριεῖ) the conscience (9:14). The Old and New Covenant are likewise contrasted in 9:15-22. The law was but a shadow (Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, 10:1) and served as a reminder (10:3, ἀναμνησις) of sin, whereas Christ abolishes the Old (ἀναίρει τὸ πρῶτον) to establish the New. Christ is the new and living way (10:19). Old Testament personages "greeted the promises of God from afar" (11:13) while God has foreseen "something better" (11:30). In all these examples the Old Testament allusions are prefigurements of a better reality to come. Hence, from the viewpoint of the New Testament, the Old Testament ordinances have become obsolete, outdated, or antiquated (8:13; 9:9a). A continuity exists with the Old Testa-

ment because God commanded its ordinances (Heb. 1:1-2) and because the Old serves to point out its fulfillment in Christ. The discontinuity of New Testament Messianic promises with the past occurs because God's new revelation in Christ has come (e.g., Heb. 8:8-12). The ceremonial aspect of the Third Commandment has become obsolete for the New Age. Furthermore, the sabbath served as a type (cf. ἀνάμνησις, 10:3) for the rest of the Messianic Age.

Gordon Wenham has theologially elaborated upon the "making obsolete" of Heb. 8:13. Wenham outlines the purpose and function of the ritual laws of the Old Testament. He proposes that the Old Testament purity laws were symbolic:

. . . that is, they are real laws which have to be observed, but in obeying them Israel was constantly reminded of certain fundamental theological truths, e.g. that God had chosen Israel, that God was the creator and source of life.⁴⁷

The unique food regulations reminded Israel that she was chosen by God and was different from all other nations. "These food laws, therefore, pictured to the faithful Israelite the mystery of his redemption."⁴⁸ In the New Testament such laws unique to Israel had to be cast aside, for now it is seen how God, through our Lord's ministry, has ushered in a New Age of grace. But "God's character as the giver of life . . . is not abolished."⁴⁹ Wenham mentions that the advent of Jesus made the Old Testament ceremonial laws obsolete in one sense

but in another sense "it enhances and underlies it [Jesus' Incarnation] most dramatically"⁵⁰ in that Jesus bears "witness to God's character [e.g. Christ's healing ministry relates to the love God expressed earlier to the Israelites by establishing unique laws]."⁵¹ There is a transferable point between the "obsolescence" of Heb. 8:13 and the obsolescence of the ritual law.

The Old Covenant is made obsolete by the New. The old laws are viewed typologically, pointing to Christ as the herald of the New Age. When the Christian studies the Old Testament ceremonial sabbath laws and other ritual food laws, he learns that fulfillment of these institutions (what they pointed to) has now come. The uniqueness and **locatedness** of God's selection of Israel are seen to be narrowed down to Christ, the one true Israel. Heb. 8:13 makes it apparent that a theological basis for freedom from a particular day for the worship gathering developed in the New Testament as the faith response to the identification of Christ as the end-goal of the sabbath (see Rom. 10:4). The sabbath was an Old Testament type which was now clearly pointing to its fulfillment. New Testament worship does not emphasize a particular day; instead, it emphasizes the person of Christ Himself. True Christianity consists in appreciating the unique role of the Savior claiming His own so that believers partake

of Him, which is their true worship (see 3:14, μέτοχοι τοῦ χριστοῦ).⁵²

Logike Latreia, Romans 12:1-2

Paul makes an appeal to Christians that on the basis of God's mercy (διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν)⁵³ they render themselves completely and sacrificially in worship of God.⁵⁴ The believer is to present his whole life to God "as a living sacrifice (θυσίαν ζῶσαν)"⁵⁵ which is "holy and acceptable to God" (ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ), and this is his "spiritual worship" (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν). Worship for the Christian is removed from the arena of performance of ritual to a total consecration of life to God.⁵⁶ F. F. Bruce explains: "The sacrifices of the new order do not consist in taking the lives of others, like the ancient animal sacrifices, but in giving one's own (cf. Heb. 13:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:5)."⁵⁷ The nature of worship given expression in Romans 12 is marked by the confession that the believer is set apart as God's own possession. This text speaks of the differentiation from the world that should characterize the Christian life. The believer does not live for this age but is reoriented to the Age to come, the New Age which has already begun (v. 2, "Do not be conformed to this world [τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ] . . ."). The imperative which

demands a renewal of the mind in verse 2 does not originate from human effort but from the Spirit's gift (cf. Rom. 7:25).

Context demands the conclusion that the Apostle Paul employs the terminology and thought patterns suggested by liturgical and cultic actions. He urges, for example, the presentation (*παραστήραι*) of the offering of one's body which is a living sacrifice (*θυσίαν ζώσαν*) and which is holy and acceptable to God (*άγιαν εύάρεστον*).⁵⁸ The concept of inner and spiritual worship must be distinguished from the outward corporate worship activities of the Christian church. While forms of the word *latreia* are used in connection with the old ceremonies (e.g., Acts 26:7; Rom. 9:4; Heb. 8:5; Heb. 9:1,6,9; Heb. 10:2; & Heb. 13:10), the term has acquired a new meaning in the New Testament.⁵⁹ The Christian's whole life is worship (*λατρεία*; see Acts 24:14, 2 Tim. 1:3, & Philemon 3). *Latreia* is the total conduct of the Christian before God, according to Peter Brunner, who states:

The antiritual character of this service is very clearly discernible here where thought and prayer worship designates the total conduct of the Christian before God. But the Spirit has burst asunder the legal-ritual bonds of Torah and worship form. The Spirit touches the total existence of man.⁶⁰

In contrast, the word *leiturgia* has become a designation for cultic functions, the term having been adapted from classical literature with the meaning of rendering a

service of some kind to the people.⁶¹ *Leiturgia* is the word employed for the cultic functions of the priest (see Heb. 9:21 & Luke 1:23). The collection for the congregations of Jerusalem is a *leiturgia* (2 Cor. 9:22; Phil. 2:25,30).

Having distinguished between *latreia* and *leiturgia*, it is also necessary to state that there is a vital connection between them. The worship of the Christian is not meant to be only "ethical living," but New Testament worship also consists of corporate gatherings and mutual partaking of the sacrament.⁶² The *leiturgia* becomes the body of the soul, *latreia*. Paul subsequently affirms that the Christian thereby sacrifices his body to the Lord as a worship which is living, holy, and acceptable to the Lord (Romans 12). Paul surely is going beyond the idea of merely living for the Lord. Knowing that "life" and "living" have special reference in Pauline vocabulary to the resurrection life, that significance is surely present here (see, for example, Rom. 8:5-13 and note that *latreia* is empowered by the Holy Spirit).⁶³ Christians' lives are offered as sacrifices to God because God in Christ has redeemed the body and declared it holy. His Spirit has taken possession of the body (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

The pagans and Jews had their sacrificial rites; however, Paul insists that the Christians' presentation of their

lives to God is their proper cultic rite and sacrificial offering. This rite is not external or ceremonial but *logike*. A difficulty exists in rendering λογικὴν into English, a word which is obviously based upon the noun λόγος. F. F. Bruce presents typical ways of handling the difficulty when he explains that the spiritual worship (λογικὴ λατρεία) could either mean "reasonable" as the only "logical response to the grace of God" or "spiritual" as "set in contrast with the externalities of Israel's cult as a bloodless sacrifice."⁶⁴ Other renditions are possible.⁶⁵ They are all efforts in attempting to describe the nature of worship for the New Age. Martin Franzmann points out the sense of continuity with the Old Testament and the discontinuity that this New Testament concept of worship conveys:

With the hallowed term "sacrifice" Paul marks the continuity of the new worship with the old worship under the Law; with the modifier "living" he marks the discontinuity, the newness of the new worship. . . . This is "spiritual worship." What the old system with its ritual prescriptions for sacrifice foreshadowed has become substance and reality. This is now worship in its truest and deepest sense. All previous worship has been but a parable to this reality.⁶⁶

Summary

Jesus introduced the New Age by accenting themes of release and liberty from bondage associated with the sabbath and Jubilee Year. Old Testament ceremonial provisions were becoming superseded by the arrival of the Messiah Whom the Old Testament prefigured. The worship that pertains to the New Age is best described as resulting from living faith and it is not confined to external Old Testament cultic rituals; it became known as worship in Spirit and truth. To be sure, externals such as corporate worship gatherings became part of the worship praxis connected with the New Age. But New Testament worship must take into account the fact of fulfillment of the Old by Christ.⁶⁷ Christ gives meaning to the *synaxis* and *praxis* of New Testament worship. The fulfillment effected by Christ includes His fulfillment of the sabbath. The old sabbath pointed to God's promised offer of rest. This promise was directly offered by Christ to all burdened by sin and law (Matthew 11). In Hebrews 3 and 4 the same invitation is offered because the Messianic Age exists "today." God's offer of rest in today's age causes prior "rests" to become obsolete. Their obsolescence characterizes the newness and fulfillment brought about by Christ. Thus it can safely and accurately be said that Christ did not abolish the sabbath, but He fulfilled it. The Christian's

whole life is to reflect the newness that results from his new life. God does not expect obedience and slavish service to ordinances but He wants the whole, new man (Romans 12). Such theological principles lead to practical applications.

ENDNOTES

¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 21; William F. Arndt, Luke (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 132; Frederick W. Danker, Jesus and the New Age (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1974), 54; John Martin Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Macmillan, 1965), 65-66; Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 194-95; Kurt Aland, Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1965), 44, 46-47; I. H. Marshall, The Gospel of Luke (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 177.

²Gerhard Delling, πλήρης, κτλ, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-74), 6:294 (Hereafter TDNT): "The goal of the mission of Jesus is fulfillment (Mt. 5:17b) As He sees it, His task is to actualize the will of God . . ." See also D. A. Carson, who catalogues various interpretations of "fulfill" and offers this: "In short, the antithesis of (Mt) 5:17 is not between abolishing the law and preserving it in some form, but between abolishing it and fulfilling it. . . . The Law and the Prophets, far from being abolished, find their valid continuity in terms of their outworking in Jesus. The detailed prescriptions of the Old Testament may well be superseded, because whatever is prophetic must be in some sense provisional." D. A. Carson, "Jesus and the Sabbath in the Four Gospels," in From Sabbath to Lord's Day, ed D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 77.

³James A Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," Interpretation 36 (April 1982): 151, "According to Luke, Jesus omitted the phrase about healing the broken hearted and inserted one from LXX Isaiah 58:6 about sending the oppressed away in release, literally, or to set at liberty those who were oppressed. The phrase in Luke 4:18 is verbatim what we have at LXX Isaiah 58:6. . . . Why could Luke, or Jesus, mix scripture like that; and how could he get away with it? It was not at all uncommon as a practice in the first century to pull two or more passages out of their original literary context and read them together. This was most often done by word tal-

lying, that is, each passage would have had in it one word at least that was the same. In this case it was the Greek word *aphesis*, meaning release or forgiveness: to preach *aphesis* to captives (Isaiah 61:1) and to send the oppressed in *aphesis* (58:6). . . . What one has to realize to get the full impact of this word-tallying is that the word *aphesis* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *shemittah* in Deuteronomy 15 and the Hebrew *deror* in Leviticus 25--the two passages in the Old Testament which provide legislation concerning the Jubilee year."

⁴Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), 23, aptly remarks: "The redemptive function of the Sabbath was seemingly understood as a prefiguration of the mission of the Messiah. The liberation from the hardship of work and from the social inequalities, which both the weekly and annual Sabbath granted to all the members of the Hebrew society, was viewed as foreshadowing the fuller redemption the Messiah would one day bring to His people. The Messianic age of the ingathering of all the nations is described in Isaiah as the time when 'from Sabbath to Sabbath all flesh shall come to worship before me' (66:23)."

⁵The Sabbath Year is commanded in Ex. 23:10-11. The reason given is consideration on behalf of the poor and animals. A more detailed wording is given in Lev. 25:1-7, describing it as a rest for the land which is a sabbath for Yahweh. The produce is to be common property for man and beast. See Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1963), II, 12.3, 81. The Sabbath Year is amplified in Deut. 15:1-11, where the subject concerning release is to be underscored. The release of debts should come from a magnanimous heart prompted by God's initial blessings toward the releaser (6a, 10b). Since "the poor will never cease from the land" (v. 11a) the Israelite must be instrumental in achieving the hope that "there will be no poor among you" (v. 4a). Thus we see how the actual practices of the Sabbatical year were meant for the good of the nation, and were rooted in God's grace and blessing.

⁶The sabbatical Year of Jubilee is derived from the idea of the sabbath years. "On the tenth day of the seventh month" the fiftieth year began and liberty was to be proclaimed as a jubilee for the nation (Lev. 25:9). The Jubilee

Year was the end of the cycle of seven sabbatical years. It held cessation from labor (Lev. 25:11) in common with the Sabbath Year. Its uniqueness was in proclaiming liberty.

⁷E.g., C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament. 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983 repr.), 7:426; P. E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary. 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1924), 2 (OT):388; J. Bright, "Isaiah," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley, eds. (London: Nelson, 1962), 532.

⁸Matthew (12:18-21) introduces Jesus as God's Servant by means of the Is. 42:1-4 quotation in the context of healing on a sabbath. Jesus also speaks of the Good News of the Messianic Age to the disciples of John the Baptizer (Matt. 11:4-6).

⁹Deut. 15:4, "there will be no poor among you," uses רָעָם . Is. 61:1, "to the afflicted (poor)," uses רָעָם . Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, repr. 1966), 2, defines רָעָם as "in want, needy, poor." The same lexicon, 776, defines רָעָם as "poor, afflicted, humble, meek." Isaiah has subtly shifted from the physical poor to the spiritual poor.

¹⁰The LXX apparently took the meaning of ἡραρῆς as "always applied to opening the eyes." See the discussion in Keil and Delitzsch, 7:426; hence, $\text{καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν}$.

¹¹Jesus (Luke 4:19) utilizes the "acceptable year of the Lord" but not the rest of the verse from the LXX (Is. 61:2b): $\text{καὶ ἡμέραν ἀναποδόσεως}$. We see the significance of this omission as a way of stating grace (ending on Gospel, not law).

¹²Edward Young explains, "When Christ said that *this day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears*, He did not mean that the prophecy was exhausted on that particular day, but rather that the time had now come of which Isaiah spoke, and that the prophecy would be fulfilled throughout the course of the Church upon earth. The passage brings to the fore the great work of redemption that the Messiah accomplished, and the proclamation of the Gospel that He and the disciples under His authority carry out." The Book of Isaiah, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:460.

¹³Danker, 59, "Today is an important word in Luke's Gospel, stressing the immediate action of the Kingdom in contrast to future apocalyptic fireworks."

¹⁴John 4:23, 5:25, & 16:32 denote "something that is just at hand." See Delling, TDNT, 9:679.

¹⁵Ernst Lohmeyer views the entrance of Christ to the Jerusalem Temple on Palm Sunday as a deliberate act designed with the purpose of claiming that He was the eschatological fulfillment of the old cultus: "This is the Lord coming to inspect and take possession of what belongs to Him." Thus, the kingdom was truly at hand. In the "temple" accounts (Matt. 21:12-16; 24:2; 26:61; 27:40; Mark 11:15-17; 13:2; 14:58; 15:29; Luke 19:43-7; John 2:19; Acts 6:14) there is a message of the destruction of the old cultus and the building of a new heavenly temple. The symbolic cleansing actions of Jesus marked the end of the old covenant. While Jesus is reported to have expelled the merchants trading in sacrificial animals and the money changers, His actions went "beyond the outer court." Lord of the Temple (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 34.

¹⁶Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, i-xii, Anchor (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 180.

¹⁷Peter Brunner, Worship in the Name of Jesus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 17.

¹⁸See 1 Cor. 15:45b-46, which defines the Christian believer as one who is "spiritual" and given the life-giving Spirit: ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. ἀλλ' οὐ πρῶτον τὸ πνευματικὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ψυχικόν, ἔπειτα τὸ πνευματικόν. Cf. also Rom. 8:16, "it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

¹⁹The sabbath provided the backdrop for Christ's assertion of authority to replace the Old with the New. The Christological/theological basis of the freedom for worshipping on any day for the Christian derives from Christ's having fulfilled the sabbath. He Himself did not abrogate the sabbath nor on the other hand did He direct attention to the sabbath for observance in the New Age. Instead, He claimed to be the end-goal of the sabbath Himself. See Robert J. Banks, Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 117.

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¹⁶Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel according to John, i-xii, Anchor (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 180.

¹⁷Peter Brunner, Worship in the Name of Jesus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 17.

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²⁰Note that the more common ἀναπαύω, κτλ appears in Matthew 11 but καταπαύω, κτλ in Hebrews 3 and 4. The former is described by Otto Bauernfeind, TDNT, 1:350, as referring to corporal rest, refreshment. In Matt. 11:28, "the word comprehends the whole saving work of Jesus." The latter is described (Bauernfeind, TDNT, 3:627-8) as ceasing or causing to cease; it is the rest that ends or is restrained so as to cease. It appears that καταπαύω is employed in Psalm 95 and Heb. 3 and 4 because the word is used in Gen. 2:2.

²¹J. Y. Campbell, "Rest," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 4 vols., ed. G. A. Buttrick (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1962), 4:38.

²²Many interpreters see the yoke and burden as oppressive Jewish law (primarily Halakah). See R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 456-57. Bacchiocchi, 62, states that "Christ's Sabbath rest is viewed as an 'easy yoke' and 'light burden' possibly by contrast with the heavy yoke of rabbinical requirements which weighed heavily upon the people. This figure was familiar to Christ's hearers, since the rabbis referred to the Law as a 'yoke' and to the disciples as those who put their neck under the 'yoke.'" See also Eduard Schweizer, The Good News According to Matthew, trans. David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 272-73; and Daniel Patte, who remarks, "It then appears that the text alludes to Israel's leaders and the Pharisees who play a central role in the next chapter. Because they have such an attitude, they burden others with an excessive load, of the same character as their excessive view of themselves." The Gospel According to Matthew, A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 165.

²³Lenski calls this a "volitive future, expressing Christ's will . . ." Matthew, 457.

²⁴Ibid., 456-57.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Philip E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 2-3.

²⁷The Hebrew words for rest are *שָׁבַת*, *נָחָה*, and *מָנוּחָה*.

²⁸Otfried Hofius, Katapausis: Die Vorstellung vom endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1970), 127-31, demonstrates the influence of Numbers 14 on Heb. 3:7-4:13. On the other hand, Hughes, 142, relates the reference to Ex. 17:1-7.

²⁹F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 70, n. 4, takes this as a nominative, though the accusative has strong textual support. See also Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), 665, for a concise explanation of the problems connected with this word.

³⁰A. T. Lincoln, "Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament," in From Sabbath to Lord's Day, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 208-9, reports that the normally used term for rest in the NT and LXX is *ἀνάπαυσις*. The use of *κατάπαυσις* in Hebrews 3 and 4 is intentional and reflects LXX usage. The noun occurs 8 times in this passage (plus verbal forms 3x's), meaning either a state of rest or a resting place. The former is probably meant in Ex. 35:2; 2 Macc. 15:1; Num. 10:35; 1 Kings 8:56. The latter meaning appears in Deut. 12:9; Ps. 131:14; 1 Chron. 6:31; 2 Chron. 6:41; Is. 66:1; Judith 9:8; and probably Ps. 95:11 [viz. *מָנוּחָה*]. The Heb. word can be used of a place (e.g., land at Deut. 12:9) or for the temple as God's resting place (Ps. 132:8,14; 1 Chron. 6:16; 2 Chron. 6:41). From his research Lincoln concludes, p. 209: "It seems very likely that being acquainted with such a tradition the writer of Hebrews views 'rest' as an eschatological resting place with associations with the heavenly promised land, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the heavenly sanctuary. This view is confirmed by the frequency of these items in Hebrews (cf. the heavenly sanctuary 6:19-20; 8:2; 9:11,23-24; 10:19, the city that is to come, the heavenly Jerusalem 11:10,16; 12:22; 13:14 and the heavenly promised land 11:14ff.)." He also adds, p. 209, "The heavenly resting place awaiting the people of God is to be seen as part of God's creation rest, and for this reason it is still available, since the possession of Canaan was a type of the divine rest that has been there since the creation."

³¹The younger generation under Joshua settled the land of Canaan, but that did not cover the whole extent of the

promise; therefore, a rest still remains. See Franz Julius Delitzsch, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, 2 vols., trans. Thomas L. Kingsbury (Minneapolis: Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, 1871, repr. 1978), 1:195-96; and Hughes, 155.

³²Charles F. D Moule, An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 10.

³³Since Heb. 4:3 states that believers have already entered God's rest, while 4:11 encourages the believer to strive to enter it, we detect the concept often expressed as "already, but not yet." Ernst Käsemann, The Wandering People of God, trans. Roy A. Harrisville and Irving L. Sandberg (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 74-75, while correct in identifying the rest as a place, inaccurately describes it **only** as a heavenly rest to which the people of God are headed. He bases his argument erroneously on Alexandrian Gnosticism (viz. pp. 87-96). On the other hand, Hofius bases his analysis on Septuagintal influence and concludes that *κατάπαυσις* is a defined resting place in the heavenly sanctuary. See Hofius, 49-50, 53, 58, 100-1. Lincoln, 210, rightly rejects Käsemann's inclination toward a gnostic explanation, when he states: "It is now that we see the significance of the fact that the rest is pictured in spatial terms in heaven. As elsewhere in apocalyptic literature and in the New Testament the concept of heaven is being employed to express the view that the eschatological benefits of salvation are already present."

³⁴The *πού* in v. 4 is probably not local ("somewhere") but general ("as we know"); hence, it is not intended to be vague. See Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 96.

³⁵*Κατάπαυσις* and cognates are employed in Gen. 2:2: *καὶ κατέπαυσεν*. *Κατάπαυσις* is used of sabbath rest in Ex. 35:2 and 2 Macc. 15:1.

³⁶A. T. Lincoln, 213, interprets these dead works as not having "a physical reference but as elsewhere in the New Testament a salvation connotation . . ." On the other hand, F. F. Bruce, 78, interprets this as a reference to man's own works only.

³⁷That is, the creation rest of Gen. 2:2 is interpreted eschatologically in Hebrews, understanding the κατάπαυσις as a place with sanctuary associations. Believers are described as having access to the sanctuary (Heb. 10:19, ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων), and Jesus is said to have entered the inner shrine behind the curtain (6:19-20, τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς).

³⁸Σαββατισμός is a *hapax legomenon*, appearing only here in the New Testament, not in the LXX, and only rarely in later literature (cited by A. T. Lincoln, 78, as occurring in Plutarch [ob. A.D. 120], *De Superstitione* 3 (*Moralia* 166A), and in 4 patristic occurrences). It is probably based, however, on the verb σαββατίζω, which refers to sabbath keeping (cf. Ex. 16:30; Lev. 23:32; 26:34-35; 2 Chron. 36:21). C. K. Barrett teaches that since κατάπαυσις refers to Canaan-rest, a different word was needed to convey effectively the idea of the Messianic sabbath rest to which the old sabbath pointed: "There remains therefore a 'rest' for the people of God (iv.9); but it is now described as a σαββατισμός. This word suggests the use of the cognate verb in Gen. ii.2. On the seventh day God rested, his works being therefore completed from the beginning of the world. Thus the 'rest' was the rest of the seventh day, the Sabbath; a rest always available since God had prepared it and himself entered upon it, but never in the days before Christ entered by men (as the Psalm proves); a rest of which the Sabbaths kept by the Jews might be regarded as a type" "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube in honor of Charles Harold Dodd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 367.

³⁹Obviously the New Age is implied here from the context. Heb. 1:2 announces that "in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son"; in 2:10 Jesus' work is explained as effectively "bringing many sons to glory." Therefore (διό, 3:7), we do not want to miss the sabbath rest by lack of faith in Christ, which is the point of 3:7-4:11. The working of the Father and the Son (described in John 5:17) is to be identified with accomplishing the Messianic age, since God's rest began on the 7th day of Gen. 2:2.

⁴⁰Hofius, 110, concludes that the celebration of the day is stressed, not the day itself. Lincoln, 213, thinks the word was deliberately chosen by Auctor ad Hebraeos because

κατάπαυσις was already generally identified with and used of the seventh day sabbath in the LXX.

⁴¹Thomas Hewitt suggests that the use of the term σαββατισμός in lieu of "sabbath" implies a decay in observance of the Jewish sabbath among Hebrew Christians by this time. The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 88. On the other hand, Seventh Day Adventists cite this usage as evidence that sabbath observance continued for a long time among Christians. See, e.g., Bacchiocchi, 65.

⁴²Barrett, 373, in a particularly insightful essay suggests that there is a fundamental contrast between Hebrews, Philo, and Barnabas (who tends to be chiliastic): "The doctrine of the Sabbath rest in Hebrews is neither Hellenistic [Philo] or Midrashic [Barnabas] but Christian." He mentions that Barnabas had failed to see that the Sabbath [as anti-type] had dawned, and he forced the Christian view of history into the form of a time-table, "thereby destroying its essential and characteristic paradox."

⁴³R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James (Minneapolis: Augsburg, repr. 1961), 135.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., 271.

⁴⁷Gordon Wenham, "Christ's Healing Ministry and His Attitude to the Law." Christ the Lord (Gleicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1982), 119.

⁴⁸Ibid., 122.

⁴⁹Ibid., 125.

⁵⁰Ibid., 126.

⁵¹Ibid., 125.

⁵²Delitzsch, Hebrews, 1:177, indicates that μέτοχος signifies "partner" as well as "partaker." Either way this is a

blessing. Lenski, Hebrews, 120, adds that the perfect γεγόναμεν signifies "what one 'has become' he is now."

⁵³C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Limited, 1979), 598-99. The plural probably reflects the influence of the LXX. God's mercy provides the motivation for sanctified living.

⁵⁴Ibid., 598-99. "Your bodies" means "yourselves."

⁵⁵Ibid., 600. The RSV and other translations, in making "living" an adjective modifying sacrifice, suggest more than the Greek text, namely that Christians are victims, sacrificially being killed. The three adjectives should be taken equally together. Here "living" describes "newness of life" (cf. Rom. 6:4).

⁵⁶Gerhard Delling avers, "When Paul here qualifies the Christian's λατρεία [service] with the adjective λογική [reasonable] he also means to remove it . . . from the sphere of a coercion designed to obtain favours from God (which largely characterizes heathen worship)." Worship in the New Testament, trans. Percy Scott (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 11.

⁵⁷F. F. Bruce, Romans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 213.

⁵⁸R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 747, explains that the believer's body is sacrificed to God (θυσία from θύω, "to go up in smoke") rather than just offered to God (προσφορά).

⁵⁹Cranfield, 601-2.

⁶⁰Brunner, 12.

⁶¹Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. and adapted William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 471-72.

⁶²Ferdinand Hahn, The Worship of the Early Church, trans. David E. Green and ed. John Reumann (Philadelphia:

Fortress Press, 1973), 38-39, argues that "any cultic understanding of Christian worship is out of the question, but also that there is no longer any distinction in principle between assembly for worship and the service of Christians in the world"

⁶³Brunner, 77.

⁶⁴Bruce, 213.

⁶⁵Cranfield, 604-5, points out the merit of taking the word to refer to inward rightness with God, contrasting internal and external dimensions of worship. He adds that it could also refer to worship consonant with the truth of the Gospel. However, he tends to favor "rational" as the opposite of *ἄλογος* (not understood Stoically, though).

⁶⁶Martin H. Franzmann, Romans (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), 217.

⁶⁷Brunner, 63.

CHAPTER IV

NEW TESTAMENT FOLGERUNGEN OF ATTITUDE TO AND TEACHINGS ABOUT SABBATH AND DAYS

An attitude is evident in the New Testament about the sabbath and other Old Testament ceremonial laws and ordinances that portrays them as being inferior to the Messiah. For example, Jesus exercised an authority over the sabbath that eventually developed into antagonism against Him on the part of the Jews. The Christian church felt a freedom from keeping Old Testament ceremonial ordinances, as seen from Paul's teaching about the position and estimation of certain days. In fact, slavish obedience to observing special days had the potential of undermining the teaching that Christ alone was sufficient for salvation. It has been established in the previous chapter that the Old Testament ceremonial ordinances are viewed as having become obsolescent in the New Age. Now it is easier to understand why Jesus acted and taught as He did with regard to the sabbath and why Paul reached the conclusions he did (hence, *Folgerungen*). Let us see the practical applications of these conclusions that were operative in the earthly ministry of Jesus and in the apostolic ministry of Paul and others.

Sabbath Healings of Jesus

Jesus performed several healings on the sabbath, some of them in the setting of the synagogue. In the first healing (Luke 4:3-37) Jesus liberated a subject from the power of Satan. Jesus brought the implications of the New Age to bear upon those in distress and illness. Satan is bound by the "stronger man" (Jesus, Luke 11:22), proving that the New Age has come and that He is fulfilling the intention of the Old Testament sabbath which had served as a type pointing to the Messiah. Note how Christ acts with authority appropriate to His divine claims (Luke 4:23,36). The miracles on the sabbath portray Christ as being the fulfillment of the sabbath.¹

Healing of the Demoniac

The first sabbath healing, that of the healing of the Demoniac (Luke 4:3-37; par. Mark 1:21:28), is inserted immediately following Luke's programmatic presentation of Christ's mission. Jesus was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum on the sabbath (Luke 4:31) when He cast out the demon for this afflicted man who was "in the synagogue" (v. 33). This sabbath day incident highlights the contrast between the "Holy One of God" (v. 34)² and Satan.³ This exorcism culminated in a reaction among the spectators (v. 36), resulting in the report being spread (v. 37). The audience

had witnessed the "authority and power" of Jesus (v. 36). Luke had earlier established the authoritative teaching of Jesus: "for his word was with authority" (v. 32). This sabbath saying demonstrates that acts of mercy are appropriate on the sabbath as true works of God and that Jesus occupied a position of authority over the sabbath.⁴

Peter's Mother-in-law

Still on the sabbath, Jesus then healed Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39; par. Matt. 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34). After she was healed, she immediately began to serve Jesus. Expediency and need led Jesus to performing these first two sabbath miracles: namely, (1) a disturbance in the synagogue arose which needed to be contained, and (2) a chance meeting with Peter's mother-in-law occurred while Jesus was visiting Peter's family. Rumors about these events must have begun spreading (Luke 4:40).

Others were brought to Jesus for healing later in the day. Crowds hesitant about engaging in work activities on the sabbath itself waited until after the sabbath was over to bring the sick to Jesus for healing (see v. 40, Δύνοντας δὲ τοῦ ἡλίου). To the people looking for the Miracle-worker Who had retired to a quiet place after these activities, He said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God . . . for I

was sent for this purpose" (4:43). Jesus here repeated His intended plan of redemption as announced earlier in Luke 4:18. The term "kingdom of God" is brought into the sabbath context and

in the light of Jesus' encounter with demonic forces and in view of his program announced at Nazareth, it is clear that the kingdom of God is a major assault on the forces of evil and a realization of Isaianic expectation.⁵

In his parallel account, Matthew describes the healing mission of Jesus with a quotation from Is. 53:4, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Matt. 8:17). It is used here not to signify His work of atonement but the defeat of sin and its manifestations. The sabbath rest of God signifies these very aspects. Here Matthew is restating the authority Jesus has over any manifestation of sin. The authority of Jesus over sin's dominion corresponds to His authority over the Old Testament sabbath ordinance. The Lord of the sabbath was on the scene bringing healing redemption and true sabbath rest.⁶ The Isaiah quotation describes the Messianic Age: "the prophesied One has come."

Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand

The account of the man with the withered hand appears in all three Synoptics (Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11). On this occasion Jesus again entered a synagogue on the sabbath.

This time Jewish authorities deliberately planned to observe Jesus' actions:⁷ "And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him" (Mark 3:2). William F. Arndt describes the situation:

The Pharisees and the scribes were no longer mere critics of Jesus, somewhat in the fashion in which the strict Pharisees (the followers of Shammai) were critical of some of the views of the milder Pharisees (the followers of Hillel), but they had become His actual enemies, eager to see Him destroyed.⁸

Matthew (12:11) shows that Jesus anticipated their purpose by Jesus' casuistic question regarding a sheep falling into a pit on the sabbath. Would it be pulled out? He contrasts the value of a man as being greater than the worth of an animal. Even the Jews should have conceded to works of benevolence on the sabbath in certain cases.⁹ The question is put into even sharper focus in Mark (3:4) and Luke (6:9), the latter reading, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?"¹⁰ Jesus certainly "did good" on the sabbath, though it would be stretching the point to say that He was saving a life that day.¹¹ The withered hand did not represent an emergency situation, but Jesus restored the hand anyway while the Jewish leaders counselled to "do harm" or "to kill" (Mark 3:4,6). From this confrontation one learns how Jesus accented human value and worth because the New Age had come (see the transitional and summa-

rizing material in Matt. 12:15-21). This is also the intention of the sabbath saying recorded at Mark 2:27, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." Christ's overall attitude toward the law was not to "abolish, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17; cf. also 12:17, "This was to fulfill . . ."). The real meaning of the sabbath as an Old Testament type for the day of salvation was gradually overshadowed by restrictions that made its observance difficult and yet possibly at the same time a system enabling one to affirm one's self-righteousness. Christ was not abolishing the sabbath; He was acting in accord with the right intention of it (See Matt. 12:12, "So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath.").¹² He, the Redeemer, did what man had not been doing and by means of a sinful nature could not fully do--He fulfilled the sabbath in a wholly satisfactory manner, in keeping with its true, redemptive intent. The blessing pertaining to the seventh day was never more fully realized until He came to offer the most significant rest of all to mankind. The antitypological blessing signified by the Old Testament type came in the person of Jesus. He came to be a blessing to all who would receive Him in faith.

Healing of the Crippled Woman

In the account of the healing of the crippled woman on the sabbath (Luke 13:10-17) Jesus again was teaching on the sabbath in one of the synagogues. Jesus took the initiative of approaching the bent-over woman and He "freed" her from her infirmity (v. 12, ἀπολύσαι, a perfect, indicative, passive, "you have been freed").

Typically, the sabbath miracle became an occasion of controversy. The president (ruler) of the synagogue was indignant but did not censure Jesus directly. He told the people that "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day" (13:14). Jesus countered by illustrating how they were permitted to untie their animals (v. 15, οὐ λύει) in order to water them on the sabbath.¹³ The sabbath was not distorted if animals were treated humanely, but this woman could not be freed from her infirmity because it was the sabbath day. Jesus therefore argued that this woman should be loosed (λυθῆναι) from Satan's eighteen year bondage on the sabbath day. The adversaries were put to shame for their hypocrisy, and the people rejoiced (v. 17).

Jesus adjudged the sabbath day to be a fitting time for healing this "daughter of Abraham" (13:16). A deliberate use of λύω appears in this pericope, underscoring the redemptive

ministry of Christ. He was neither breaking the sabbath or requiring it as a day for His followers, but was again heralding the Messianic Age when the sabbath was being fulfilled in His person and by His actions. A sabbath stripped of casuistic prohibitions, a true sabbath pointing to promised rest and redemption from sin, was honored that day by the Keeper of the sabbath while the people rejoiced at the glorious things done because the blessing of God had been announced to them.

Cure of the Man with Dropsy

In Luke 14:1-6 the cure of the man with dropsy is reported to have been on a sabbath at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees. As in the other examples, bystanders and gainsayers were watching (v. 1b, "They were watching him"). Luke reports after the question of Jesus, "Is it lawful (ἔξεστιν) to heal on the sabbath, or not?" (v. 3) that they were silent (v. 4). Had their answer been negative, they would have appeared harsh; if they had suggested waiting until after the sabbath, they would be effectively answering "no." An affirmative answer would have removed any ground of complaint against Jesus. Therefore, they remained silent.

Then Jesus asked whether they would rescue an ass or ox from a well on the sabbath day (v. 5). Their guilty con-

sciences caused them to remain silent again. No one could keep the rules of Pharisaic legislation to the letter.

Apparently the Pharisees had gone far beyond the spirit of the Third Commandment's injunction to consecrate the seventh day. The inference to be made is that by engaging in acts of mercy, the sabbath was shown to be fulfilled. The meaning that God intended for the sabbath was fulfilled by Christ. It never was kept perfectly until He came. Before the New Age it was a figure of the redemption that Christ would ultimately bring. It is important to notice from these sabbath healings that Christ was not directly annulling the sabbath; He was effectively completing it. The good that God intended for man through the sabbath was finally being realized in a way that the old sabbath could never fully accomplish.

The Paralytic and Blind Man of John 5 and 9

In John's Gospel, two sabbath miracles are reported which are very similar and are charted below:

<u>5:1-18. The Paralytic</u>	<u>9:1-41. The Blind Man</u>
5 - ill for 38 years	1 - blind from birth
6 - Jesus initiated the miracle	6 - Jesus initiated
8 - Jesus' command to rise, take bed, and walk	7 - Jesus' command to go and wash
9 - that day was the sabbath	14 - it was the sabbath

10 - Jews remarked that it was not lawful for a man to carry work

16 - Jews complained that He breaks sabbath

16 - because of the sabbath healing, Jews wanted to persecute Christ

22 - those confessing Jesus as the Christ will be excluded

17 - working "until now"

4 - work while it is day

When the paralytic of John 5 was healed, the Jews reprimanded the paralytic for his being healed since he subsequently had engaged in the work of carrying his pallet (as Jesus had instructed, 5:10-11). After the Jews stated that they were disposed to persecute Jesus (5:16), an unexpected reply came from Jesus: "My Father is working still and I am working" (5:17).¹⁴ The indignation of the Jews was levelled at Jesus because He broke the sabbath (v. 18, ἔλυσεν τὸ σάββατον; see also 9:16, "he does not keep the sabbath") and because He claimed equality with God.

As determined from Luke 4, an underlying theme of Jesus' public ministry was freeing and loosing from sin, so as to provide redemption. Jesus did not "break" the sabbath (John 5:1-18) by disregarding it. He was engaging in such activity that would bring the love and mercy of God to those in need in as much as the New Age was here. He did not wrongly labor on the sabbath, although He undoubtedly broke some halakhic prohibitions rooted in human misunderstanding of the sabbath (see John 7:19). His authority to interpret

the sabbath derived from His being the Lord of the sabbath (Mark 2:28; Matt. 12:9; Luke 6:5).

The above is made clear by another argument of Jesus at John 7:23: "If on the sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the sabbath I made a man's whole body well?" Yes, Christ kept the whole law perfectly, including submission to the sabbath. He did not transgress the law of God, even though the Jews viewed it that way in their assessment. John (5:18) reports them as saying: "This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his father, making himself equal with God."

John 5:17 contains a Christological claim. Christ regarded His sabbath activity as offering the opportunity to present His claims of divinity and Messiahship (cf. 9:4). In short, the healing activity of Jesus was divine.

The $\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\phi\epsilon\rho\iota$ of John 5:17 is significant. Many versions of the Bible have failed to reckon with the phrase adequately.¹⁵ C. F. D. Moule points out that $\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ can be "used as a preposition . . . meaning up to, as far as, both spatially and metaphorically . . . It is used, in a closely related way, with adverbs . . ."¹⁶ The strength of Moule's possi-

bilities suggests this translation: "My Father works **until now--and I am working.**"

Does the continuous activity of God with which Jesus identifies Himself conflict with the description in Gen. 2:2-3 of God's rest on the seventh day? In what kind of work is Jesus engaged? Various solutions have been proposed to explain this enigmatic statement of Jesus. They are described below in summary fashion with some overlapping of ideas.

The working (*ἐργάζεται, ἐργάζομαι*) can refer to: a. creative rest - Christ abolished the sabbath by working on it; b. redemptive rest - Christ abrogated the sabbath for Himself; and c. redemptive rest - Christ fulfilled the sabbath and therefore it has become obsolescent.

First, there is the view that God does not rest from creation activity and He never has rested. Although He created the world and in some way it can be said that He rested (Gen. 2:1-3), in view of His preservation and governance of the world He is in an active position over the world. This idea is an old one. Jewish theology, for example, tended to develop a distaste for such an anthropomorphic view of God's rest, one that was deprecating of an active God, giving Him an otiose posture over the world. The Hellenistic Jew Philo reasoned, "God never ceased to act but as it is the property

of fire to warm, so it is of God to create."¹⁷ This view parallels an interpretation of John 5:17 which understands the claim of Jesus (Who with the Father is always working) as abolishing the sabbath because God Himself allegedly never has kept the creation sabbath rest. According to this understanding, by making clear that He was indeed working on the sabbath, Jesus was asserting the inapplicability of the sabbath rest to Himself, which assertion rests on the identification of Himself with God. Thus He is said to have defended His sabbath activity on the basis of this Jewish understanding.

B. F. Westcott interprets John 5:17 this way: ". . . the rest of God after the creation . . . is not a state of inaction, but of activity."¹⁸ He adds, "The work of Christ . . . was . . . coincident with the working of God which knows no interruption."¹⁹ Westcott is not oblivious to the import of this verse when he mediates his view and states: "By the 'work' of the Father we must understand at once the maintenance of the material creation and the redemption and restoration of all things . . ."²⁰ C. H. Dodd essentially handles the verse the same way, trying to excuse Jesus from sabbath restrictions:

John . . . speaks of two divine activities, ζῳοποιεῖν (from 5:21) and κρῖναι (from 5:22). The former is clearly a function of the creative power of God, the latter of the

kingly power. The maxim, ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἄρτι ἐργάζεται, is specifically true in respect of these two activities: even on the Sabbath as always, God gives life and judges. The words which follow, καὶ γὰρ ἐργάζομαι, imply that the life-giving work which Jesus has performed on the Sabbath is an instance of the divine activity of ζωοποίησις and as such is exempt from the sabbath restrictions.²¹

The end result of this view is precisely to exempt Jesus of censure for "working" on the sabbath. Once acquitted, the next step is to allow that He declared the sabbath as broken. So Westcott says of Jesus: ". . . he declared that the law of the sabbath was not binding. The word (λύω, v. 18) expresses . . . the abrogation of the duty of observance."²²

This exegete is convinced that in this logion, Jesus did not abolish the sabbath. Although this was His ultimate intention, and although the Christian Church has rightfully abrogated the sabbath as a ceremonial law pertaining to the Old Covenant, Christ here put Himself totally under that law. He did not abolish the law, but fulfilled it (cf. Matt. 5:17). Nothing in John 5:1-18, 9:1-41, nor even in 7:14-24 suggests that Christ abolished or broke the sabbath by working on it. A more accurate way of understanding His divine work activity is possible.

Secondly, there is a view that emphasizes the activity of God as being redemptive, accenting the "until now." Thus Cullmann comments, "Sein 'Ausruhen' ist nicht gleichbedeutend mit 'nicht arbeiten.'"²³ In other words, divine activity is

admirably understood in relation to the work of Christ in salvation and mercy for the world. Usually spokesmen for this view believe that the "until now" refers to the time of Jesus. For example, Oscar Cullmann implies that the real "rest" of God, that end of the history of salvation, will come when the end of time comes; however, practically speaking, it is at the resurrection of Christ: "Sicher weist das εως ἄρτι in John. 5,17 der johanneischen Doppelschau gemäss zugleich auf die Auferstehung Christi und die Neuschöpfung am Ende hin."²⁴ Cullmann expresses sound ideas about the sabbath's fulfillment:

So verstehen wir die christologische Begründung der Freiheit Jesu gegenüber dem jüdischen Sabbat in Joh. 5,17. Jesu Offenbarungswerk bereitet ihm ein Ende, und zwar so, daß er die letzte göttliche Absicht, die hinter der Einsetzung des alttestamentlichen Sabbattages liegt, zur Erfüllung bringt, genau wie er dem Tempelkult ein Ende bereitet, indem er in seiner Person den letzten Sinn des alttestamentlich Tempels erfüllt. (Joh. 2,21).²⁵

Cullmann, however, then suggests that Sunday (not Christ) represents the fulfillment and culmination of the Divine rest: "Die Auferstehung Christi ist Vorwegnahme dieses endgültigen Sabbats. . . . Dem entspricht es nun auch daß der christliche Sonntag, der Tag des Herrn, ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου, Vorwegnahme jenes anderen 'Tag des Herrn' ist, des 'jom Jahve'"²⁶ Cullmann implies that Christ abrogated the

sabbath for Himself by working on it because it would eventually be abrogated by Sunday, the day of the resurrection.

In the first interpretation, commentators see in the continuous activity of God the proof of the claim that Christ abolished the sabbath. Christ's sabbath activity was justified on the basis of God's continuous creation activity. God does not rest, and so neither did Christ. The second interpretation, by emphasizing ongoing divine redemptive activity, avers that God will find rest at the end of the ages, of which Sunday is a new type.²⁷ Christ's redemptive sabbath work is viewed as justifying abrogation of the sabbath.

Preferred is a third view, which accents the work of God and Christ in redemption (as above) but which focuses on the fulfillment of the Third Commandment by the whole ministry of Christ. This view takes seriously God's rest from creative activity on the seventh day and the fact that Christ as Incarnate God, in His flesh, was fully under the Old Testament law in His earthly ministry. The main difference from the second view above is that the latter view insists that Jesus was obedient to the sabbath commandment of the Old Testament rather than that He abrogated the Old Testament law for Himself. Christ put Himself under the law, not above the law. Both the second and third views, however, do stress the work of Christ as being redemptive, whereas the first view

discussed earlier stresses God's ongoing activity as an extension of creation, an activity in which Christ shares.

R. C. H. Lenski articulates our "third view":

Jesus does not say: the Father and I in this work of grace do not transgress the Sabbath. The Sabbath law was indeed temporary (Col. 2:16,17), but we should misunderstand Jesus if we supposed that he already abrogated, at least for himself, the divine regulations of the Sabbath law as God had given them to Israel. He does not mean that the Father and the Son are superior to this old Sabbath law, since both are God, or that he (Jesus) is free to disregard its regulations. The fact is the contrary. As the Messiah Jesus was put under the law and in his entire life and during his entire office [He] fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law, including all the divine regulations. Only confusion results when we bring in the Christian Sunday and when we make Jesus live according to this instead of according to the Jewish Sabbath.²⁸

Bacchiocchi's exegetical arguments help us understand John 5:17 in this third "redemptive way."²⁹ He observes that God's works of creation were accomplished in the past, at the beginning. St. John is aware of this when he states: "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3)." The ἀρχή of John 1:1 and the aorist ἐγένετο of John 1:3 indicate that creation was concluded in the distant past. Secondly, when Christ identified His working with the Father's, it is clear that since creation work was already accomplished the work here must be another kind of activity. Thirdly, God's work is identified as the saving activity of God in Jesus. For example, "the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these

very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me" (John 5:36). The purpose of the divine work is mentioned in John 6:29, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (see also John 9:3-4; 10:37,38; 14:11; 15:24). To avoid any misunderstanding Christ explained the nature of His works as giving life to whom He will (John 5:21; cf. 9:4, "We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day.") and conducting saving judgment (5:22-23). Fourthly, many activities were actually sanctified on the sabbath because they were involved with the saving activity of God. For example, even though baking was forbidden on the sabbath, the priests in the Old Testament legally baked the temple bread (1 Sam. 21:3-6). The same would be true of the "work" of the priests' sacrificing on the sabbath and the legitimacy of circumcising on the sabbath if it were the eighth day. The latter is explained more fully by Christ (John 7:21-24), where this sabbath discussion continues. Thus Bacchiocchi says, "These works of salvation on which the Father is constantly engaged, are contemplated and permitted by the Sabbath commandment."³⁰ He sums up his whole argument:

If our identification of the "working until now" of the Father (5:17) as the saving mission of Christ is correct, a conclusion which to us appears inescapable, then those interpretations . . . which explain Christ's words as a reference to the creation Sabbath rest which allegedly

God has never kept yet, are altogether unwarranted, since the notion of creation is not present at all in John 5:17.³¹

In summary, the Father's work activity in relation to the redemption of His people climaxed in Jesus and the New Age. God is not literally working in the sense of on-going creation/preservation, but rather working in the sense of preparing the way for the Messianic Age. The sabbath, for example, was an Old Testament type to be in effect until Christ should come. What was symbolized by the sabbath is now fulfilled in Christ. The "until now" of John 5:17 marks the end of the Old Era and the threshold of the New Age (see John 16:16 and Matt. 11:12-13). The reports of Jesus' miraculous sabbath healings (e.g., John 5 and 9) carry theological implications which intentionally relate to the fulfillment of the sabbath by the Messiah and the dawn of the New Age. The New Testament sense of freedom concerning sabbath and days stems from fulfillment of the sabbath, not from its direct disestablishment or substitution by another day.

Sabbath Teachings of Jesus

The most incisive statements of Jesus on the Old Testament ceremonial sabbath and its fulfillment occur in the context of traveling through, and eating in, the grainfield (Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5).³² The altercation

between the Pharisees and Jesus led to the memorable statement that the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath (Mark 2:28). Hunger is the reason offered for the disciples' behavior (Matt. 12:1,3; Mark 2:25; Luke 6:3).³³ According to rabbinic reckoning they were guilty of reaping, of threshing by rubbing, of winnowing by de-husking, and of preparing a meal to eat.³⁴ In none of the accounts is Jesus Himself described as guilty of breaking the sabbath (Matt. 12:7). Indeed, the Pharisees approached Him as the leader of the disciples with their complaints about the **disciples'** unlawful actions.

Since there were no objections registered by the Pharisees against the company of Jesus and His companions about their traveling, it is possible to surmise that they were only going a short distance.³⁵ At any rate, the episode presented the opportunity for Jesus to testify of Himself as the fulfillment of the sabbath. Against the Pharisees' objections, Christ reminded the Pharisees how David's army was nourished by partaking of the Showbread reserved only for the priests (1 Sam. 21:1-7). The implication was that, if it were legitimate for David to allay hunger by eating bread reserved for holy use, then it was also permissible for the disciples.³⁶ Jesus additionally presented the argument that the priests actually "profane the sabbath, and are guiltless" by permitting work in the temple (Matt. 12:5).³⁷ Then Jesus

continued, "something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' (Hos. 6:6) you would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matt. 12:6-7). His reference to the temple assisted in explaining His Messianic fulfillment of an Old Testament type.

Jesus announced His office as being greater than the temple and its ordinances, just like His claim that He was Lord of, and therefore greater than, the sabbath; He was greater because what the Old Testament types pointed to had now arrived in their fulfillment. He would deliver mercy, not casuistry.³⁸ His followers would benefit from His mercifulness rather than having to endure legalistic Halakah. The account of walking through the grainfield afforded an opportunity for Jesus to exemplify what the Old Testament really pointed to--rest and redemption in the Savior of Whom David was a type and David's company a type of the disciples.³⁹

The pericope closes with a Christological claim about the sabbath. Mark alone quotes these words of Jesus (2:27): "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath."⁴⁰ Here Jesus attempted to emphasize the beneficial nature of the sabbath as typical of the day of salvation rather than that it should be a burden.⁴¹ Underscoring the theme that Christ is the fulfillment of the sabbath, Jesus was empha-

sizing the grace and mercy of God that the sabbath had typified in the Old Testament. That is, the promise of rest is given to man because the Fulfiller of the sabbath had come. The Jews had wrongly placed the sabbath **above** human beings even though it had originally come into being (ἐγένετο) on account of man (διὰ), for his good and welfare.⁴²

The next saying is reported by all three Synoptics, standing alone in Matthew and Luke,⁴³ whereas Mark connects the two verses (27 and 28) with ὥστε.⁴⁴ Suggestions have been made that the "Son of man" is a Greek mistranslation of the Aramaic *barnasha*⁴⁵ and that the verse really should read properly: "The sabbath was made for man . . . so man is lord even of the sabbath."⁴⁶ However, the phrase "Son of man" cannot be dismissed so lightly since the term is so integral to the Synoptics' Christology.⁴⁷ The sabbath is meant to be more than just an opportunity to satisfy man's need for physical relaxation. As is well known, the stock phrase, "Son of man," emphasizes Christ's dual nature, divine and human.⁴⁸ The divine "Son of Man" claimed authority over the sabbath.⁴⁹ Arndt points out that Christ considered the sabbath to be obsolete:

Jesus does not say that the Sabbath law is abrogated; this teaching He left for His Apostles to promulgate. But He does emphatically state that He, the Messiah, has the authority to declare it void.⁵⁰

The real significance of the statement that Christ is "Lord of the sabbath" lies in the fact that the sabbath prefigured Christ.⁵¹ Jesus used the criticism levelled against Him in the grainfield on the sabbath for the opportunity of teaching that He was the antitype of the Old Testament sabbath.⁵² It is important for us to understand and appreciate the typology of the sabbath used in this connection.⁵³

The question remains whether the two verses are correlative in Mark (vv. 27 and 28).⁵⁴ If the ὥστε joins the two verses, the inference is that just as the sabbath made for man was a type, so now the Lord of the sabbath is the Antitype. For the Israelites the sabbath was not really meant to be a burden but something salutary by offering them rest, and it served as a sign or type of the promised rest in God. Accordingly (ὥστε) now also, something good is taking place. The Son of Man is assuming the role of completing the sabbath's original intention. What the sabbath pointed to is coming to pass. Therefore, there is necessarily no tension or discontinuity between these verses. Mark 2:27 and 28 represent two different thoughts, but they blend together inferentially. The right, the authority, and the ability to fulfill the sabbath in such fashion depends on God. Thus Jesus was right in claiming lordship over the sabbath.⁵⁵ He is God! Man simply does not have the authority or ability to fulfill

the sabbath.⁵⁶ Any attempt to make man appear to have the ability to keep the sabbath lacks convincing argumentation.

It is reasonable to conclude that there certainly is a correlation between the gift of the sabbath day and the New Testament Lord of the sabbath. This correlation lies in the fact that the Lord Jesus came to be a blessing to His people. Although Jesus did not directly abolish the sabbath (Mark 2), He proclaimed its fulfillment.⁵⁷ Paul S. Minear summarizes the matter well, "For the issue was not merely whether to break or to obey the Sabbath law, but whether to reject or to believe the message that God's power had been released

..."⁵⁸

Colossians 2:16-17

Col. 2:16-17 has historically been the most important Bible passage outlining emancipation from "Jewish shadows." This pericope shows that Paul regarded the sabbath as an Old Testament typological institution fulfilled in Christ and which is no longer binding on Christians.

The reason the Letter to the Colossians was written is that Epaphras, the present spiritual leader of the church at Colossae, had brought disturbing news to Paul at Rome regarding dangers threatening the church on the part of false teachers (1:7-8; 4:12,18; Rom. 15:30; Philemon 23). Their

errors included a degradation of and a disregard for Christ (2:4,19,20; 3:1,4), an overestimation of natural religion and human philosophy (1:28; 2:8,22), and an insistence on legalistic asceticism (2:16,18,20-23). Theologically, the Colossian error was competing against Christ for man's allegiance. The false teachers at Colossae insisted on other requirements in addition to what Christ had fully accomplished for man's redemption. The errorists' teachings apparently included some vestiges of Judaism, but they were syncretistic in the sense of picking out some elements of Judaism and mixing it with their own teachings.⁵⁹ That may explain the reference to circumcision and baptism in 2:11-12, the mention of the sabbath in verse 16, and the worship of angels in verse 18 (θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων).

Perhaps the Colossian heresy came under the influence of legalistic Judaism, owing to the fluid milieu of that age in the Lycus Valley. Paul introduces a contrast between the unregenerate in 2:13 ("dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh") and the unregenerate. The heart of the matter, then, was that at Colossae antagonists were insisting that ceremonies, rituals (2:16), and religious rudiments (2:8) should be added to Christ. References made to the cross in verse 14 and the shadow-substance content of verse 16 show how inconsistent it would be for Christians,

appreciating the new life made possible solely through Christ, to fall back upon some kind of syncretistic religion. The Christian has been taught the cross (2:14), is acquainted with the "substance" (v. 17), and has been forgiven (2:13). He now lives in the New Age, the Gospel Time. Paul had to combat the danger of their slipping back to old ways. He asks, "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe (ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου)⁶⁰ why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?" (v. 20) Rigoristic and ascetic religious efforts (v. 21) "have no value" (v. 23).

Paul offers practical teaching which disallows Old Testament ordinances (Col. 2:16-17). These ordinances must not be used as the basis for assessing an individual's religious performance: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you (Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω) in questions of food or drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow (σκιά) of what is to come (τῶν μελλόντων), but the substance belongs to Christ (τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ χριστοῦ)."

The οὖν (therefore) is inferential, drawing out the consequences of the previous statements (e.g. 2:10,13). Since the Christian is complete in Christ, external ordinances are obsolete. They are not essential to the Christian life and even have the potential of distracting from Christ.

cial days, the sabbath was pre-eminent (like circumcision and avoidance of pork) in the popular mind as ordinances that separated the Jew from the Gentile. In the New Testament Age, when all are one in Christ on the basis of faith instead of works, no such ordinances need to be given. The five anarthrous nouns probably suggest that no specific foods, drinks, or holidays are meant. Thus Paul's examples represent typical ceremonial ordinances commonly observed by Jews and which may have been known among the various Judaizing errorists. The fact that these examples are taken from Judaism suggests one of the sources of the syncretistic teaching of the errorists. A fair assumption is that the Colossian heresy was basically Jewish-oriented and one which had undergone "a remarkable fusion with a philosophy of non-Jewish origin."⁶⁵ They were taking "this and that" from various sources and teachings, the amalgam being touted as the best religion in place of Christ.⁶⁶ Paul is not so interested in mentioning every error of the syncretists, but by mentioning these examples he establishes the principle that Christians are complete in Christ and that therefore ordinances and regulations have no additional intrinsic value.⁶⁷ No Christian should permit anyone else to sit in judgment on them with respect to such matters. The reason for Paul's warnings is that some Colossians were embracing these prac-

tices in a way that substituted Christ, not that such regulations themselves were intrinsically wrong. But the old ordinances had served their purpose by pointing to Christ. Now in the New Age they are useless since they have the potential of being substitutions for Christ. With the coming of Christ the sabbath rest found its antitype in Him. Christ did not abolish the sabbath, but His fulfilling it simply demonstrates its obsolescence for the New Age. That is why retaining the sabbath intact has the potential of substituting it for the Christ to Whom it had pointed.

This idea is elaborated upon further by the contrast between shadow and reality in verse 17.⁶⁸ The present tense (*ἄ ἐστιν σκιά*) states a general truth about the nature of the Old Testament ordinances which are mentioned.⁶⁹ They are shadows pointing to the real thing. Why should certain foods or days have any intrinsic value? Their function was to point to the future, which has now arrived. That Christ has already come demonstrates the fulfilled condition of the *μελλόντων* (2:17). Just as a shadow suggests the presence of a body, the real thing, so also Old Testament types pointed to Him. The *δέ* of 2:17b joins the two statements.⁷⁰ Note that the body is Christ's. The heresy of the Colossian Judaizers is that they did not fully appreciate the body to which the shadow pointed. These types do not typify the New Testament

Sunday nor any other particular day. That would make Sunday, the Lord's Day today, typical; it would be a shadow of something still to come. Thus the sabbath would be a shadow of a shadow. The application of verses 16 and 17 for the New Age lies in following the Body instead of the shadow. For Paul, to reestablish the sabbath was to misunderstand the temporary purpose of the shadows (ordinances) and to reject the all-sufficiency of Christ.

The word *adiaphora* refers to "indifferent things," matters that are neither commanded nor forbidden of Christians.⁷¹ The foods and days of Col. 2:16 certainly are neutral matters, in theory, in and of themselves. The danger was for the Colossian errorists to use such ordinances in work-righteously or self-righteously insisting on their own way over against the Gentile Christians or as a *sine qua non* for justification before God. However, in practice, Paul was forbidding these ordinances. The reason for prohibiting the exercise of such ordinances is because they were in fact competing against Christ. Paul viewed the regulations enforced by the "heretics" in a pejorative sense. A negative outlook on the part of Paul is detected at 2:16, "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you . . ."; at 2:18, "Let no one disqualify you (*καταβραβεύτω*) . . ." and at 2:20, "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why

do you live as if you still belonged to the world (τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ)?" In regard to the various regulations, Paul describes them as having only the appearance of wisdom (2:23, λογὸν μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας) and adds that they have no value (οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι). These examples suggest for us that Paul was critical of the imposition of such regulations upon the Christians at Colossae. Therefore, in actual practice Paul condemned the false teachings advocated by the "heretics." Insofar as the regulations competed against Christ, they could be viewed as greater or more serious than *adiaphora*. They were not neutral and harmless, but a danger to the faith. The Christians at Colossae could not remain indifferent to these matters. Paul had outlined a program of freedom from Old Testament rituals for the New Age. Christianity would never have succeeded if these pagan ideas had been allowed to stand and continue in the Apostolic churches. The nature of worship in the New Age is not marked by ceremonial observances but by faith in Christ and obedience of the heart.

Paul's doctrine of "Christian liberty" is enunciated in Colossians 2, arising from the necessities of the moment. The principles have remained for the church through the ages; however, Christians today need to be reminded of this principle. The traditional interpretation of Colossians Two is

correct and valid, namely that it declares freedom from ceremonial matters. The Old Testament ceremonies had served their purpose. Being superseded by Christ, they were not to be revived.

Galatians 4:10

The Galatian Judaizers were different from those at Colossae.⁷² They did not advocate an "improvement of Christianity enhanced by rigoristic Jewish rituals but that Circumcision and keeping the law were basically essential for converts' salvation."⁷³ To appreciate properly Paul's reference to the Galatians' observance of certain calendar days (Gal. 4:10), one must understand the context in which this teaching is made.

Paul begins by expressing his surprise and disappointment that the Galatians were so quickly and readily deserting the Gospel that Paul had earlier delivered (1:6,9; 4:9,21; 5:1). Agitators had come to Galatia with the intent of urging an imposition of Jewish laws (3:1; 4:17, "who has bewitched you"), especially circumcision (4:10; 5:2-12; 6:12,13),⁷⁴ upon the Galatian churches.⁷⁵ Perhaps the Judaizers presented themselves as the only genuine Christians from the mother community of Jerusalem.⁷⁶ Paul's Galatian opponents were Jewish Christian missionaries rivaling Paul

and acting contrary to the Jerusalem agreement mentioned in the autobiography of Gal. 2:1-10.

Hans Dieter Betz explains his interesting view about the opponents' teachings: "According to the opponents' theology, Christian existence takes place within the terms of the Jewish Torah covenant."⁷⁷ By this Betz means to imply that for the Agitators Christ is the opponent of evil and Christians enjoy protection from evil under Him. The way to receive this Torah covenant is by yielding more completely to the observance of the Torah. In their estimation Paul offered little concrete to hold on to, only Spirit and freedom. No wonder the Galatians surrendered to Paul's opponents (1:6; 4:21). They wanted the security that they thought would be offered by being conscientious keepers of the old covenant. Therefore, the Galatians were on the verge of exchanging freedom for the slavery of legalism (4:9; 5:1). Paul asks the Galatians contemplating a return to paganism, "how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more? (4:9). To begin observing external symbols of religion (4:10, "you observe days, and months, and seasons, and years") would be a return to their pre-Christian state.⁷⁸ Circumcision is the "external symbol" for the most part in the Book of Galatians.

The opponents were advocating circumcision as a basic requirement.

Betz explains why the Christian would normally want to consider himself free of circumcision as an external ritual signifying the acceptance of Judaism:

For Christians these Jewish concepts have lost their meaning, because in Paul's view--Christians' salvation is grounded in God's promise to those who "believe in Christ." If that faith has become the decisive basis of salvation, the Jewish cultic symbols and their implications must become a matter of irrelevance.⁷⁹

At any rate, Paul was concerned to show that Christians live in a New Age and the Old Covenant is past.⁸⁰ By accepting circumcision they would bind themselves to observing the law.

Calendar observances are mentioned in 4:10 instead of circumcision. Even if the use of these general Greek words (*ἡμέρας . . . καὶ μῆνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς*) is an intentional avoidance of specifically Jewish terms, the various Jewish observances, sabbath days, New Moon feasts, and the sabbatical year were surely uppermost in Paul's mind.⁸¹ As previously noted, similar specific expressions are listed in reverse order at Col 2:16-17 and clearly have reference to ordinances in Judaism.⁸² Anything less than complete freedom in ritualistic matters would be tantamount to denying Christ and the principle of Christian freedom. If Paul does imply Jewish observances (Gal. 4:10; cf. Col. 2:16-17), then these

tangible ordinances were meant to point to their fulfillment in Christ (4:28; 5:1). The Galatians, who as the Jews were scrupulously reckoning Jewish holy days, were wrong. In short, they were in danger of making salvation dependent on human achievement. The motivation for observances of calendar days and for circumcision derived from legalism instead of freedom from the law (5:4).

In Galatians Paul enunciated a doctrine of distinctively Christian liberty in the Gospel Era, in contrast to a legalism that accompanies a rejection of Christ (1:6; 2:21). Therefore, for Paul the matter of Christian liberty had to be maintained in principle (4:11-12; 5:1b).

Romans 14:1-23

The question of eating meats (v. 2), unclean food (v. 14), and the estimation of certain days (vv. 5-6) are the issues in Rom. 14:1-23.⁸³ There the primary concern was the responsibility of the "strong" in not offending the "weaker" brethren who may have had scruples about certain foods that were "common" (κοινός),⁸⁴ or who were vegetarian (14:2), or who elevated a particular day above other days (14:5).⁸⁵ The principle outlined by Paul is that observances which do not compromise the pure gospel ought not divide the brethren (14:10).⁸⁶ The Judaizers in Rome may have held ascetic, rig-

oristic views similar to those at Colossae (Rom. 14:2b,5a).⁸⁷

For our study it is important to notice that Paul did not insist on ceremonies (14:14,17), but offered a program of Christian liberty.

It is uncertain what "days" means in verses 5 and 6 ("One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days [*πάσαν ἡμέραν*] alike. He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord.").

William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam's commentary does not try to define what the "days" means here but offers this observation:

The Jew and the scrupulous Christian kept their rules of days and seasons, because they believed that their salvation depended on an exact adherence to formal ordinances. The Christian who has grasped the freedom of the Gospel recognizes the indifference in themselves of all such ordinances.⁸⁸

Lenski demonstrates how likely it is that "days" refers to "sabbaths":

What other day would any Roman Christian judge to be above other days? That self-chosen days are referred to is scarcely to be assumed. It is not difficult to see that a few Jewish Christians, some of them who perhaps came from the old mother church in Jerusalem, still clung to the Sabbath much as the Christians did after Pentecost.⁸⁹

From the context of the Jewish Christians' background, it would make sense to allow that the "days" refers to sabbath observances that were a vital part of Jewish law and

tradition.⁹⁰ Regardless, the theme of Romans 14 is the principle of liberty resulting from concern and love for one another (3,4,10a,13a,15b,19,20). St. Paul's point is that no one's personal respect for a certain day ought to be the basis of a brother's criticism by others.⁹¹ Paul summarized his concept of Christian freedom: "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14:17). The Christian will remember that his whole life is meant to be an offering of worship to the Lord: "If we live, we live to the Lord" (v. 8). Man's worth is not measured by his observance of certain calendar days.

The Apostolic Decree

The presentations so far in this study provide the background for understanding the implications of the decision of the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15). Evidently the Christians had been wrestling with the problem inherent in the proclamation of the Gospel within the developing Gentile mission (Acts 1:8; 11:1-2,22-26; 15:1-7; see also Joel's Gentile emphasis on "whoever" [Joel 2:21] in Peter's sermon). Friction can be seen both on the part of Jewish leaders (especially from the Pharisees, 15:5) as well as on the part of Jews who converted to Christianity. For example,

Stephen's virulent attack (sermon) led to his martyrdom partly because he angered the Jews by accusing them of not keeping their law (Acts 7:53).⁹² Stephen is reported to have warned, ". . . this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us" (Acts 6:14). Not much later (10:1-35) Peter was instructed in the necessity of the Gentile mission in his famous vision adjunct to Cornelius' vision. Peter may have been surprised that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on Gentiles (10:45). Later he had to defend his associations with Gentiles: "So when Peter went up to Jerusalem the circumcision party criticized him, saying, 'Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?'" (11:3) An envoy even went to Antioch where Paul and Barnabas were, opposing Paul's message by saying, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (15:1). To establish concord and arrive at a spirit-guided consensus among all believers, whether Jewish or Gentile, a council was called.

At the council Peter "rose" to defend a Christian message that was free of Jewish ceremonies imposed on the new Gentile converts, by saying, "(God) made no distinction between us and them. . . . Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples

which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

(15:9-10).⁹³ The outcome of the discussion was expressed by the respected James (the Just) to the effect that the Jewish Christians should not "trouble" the Gentile believers

(15:19).⁹⁴ However, four requests were made of the Gentile converts in the interest of not offending certain Jewish Christians who felt themselves obligated to follow Old Testament ceremonies.⁹⁵ The Gentile Christians were asked to abstain from: (1) pollutions of idols (probably food; see 15:29), (2) unchastity (πορνεία), (3) what is strangled; and (4) blood (15:20,28; 21:25). Evidently the council expressed disapprobation about a mixed list of prohibitions that had the appearance of disregarding moral and ceremonial distinctions. Notice that neither the ceremonial ritual of circumcision nor the sabbath is part of the list.⁹⁶

Efforts to reconcile all four prohibitions as being ceremonial (on the basis of prohibitions in Leviticus 17 and 18) have been difficult and not totally accepted.⁹⁷ Such efforts take unchastity to be a reference to forbidden degrees of consanguinity.⁹⁸ That would make it appear that James advocated a retention of Jewish ceremonial law and therefore probably retention of the sabbath.⁹⁹ Nor do the prohibitions effect a "compromise with the Judaizers, to accept at least some of their demands for Gentile Christians

and thus in a manner at least (try) to satisfy them," as Lenski describes the possibility.¹⁰⁰ What seems more likely is that James was saying it behooved Gentile Christians in exercising their Christian liberty not to engage in offense against "weaker brethren."¹⁰¹ Otherwise, if that is not the correct interpretation, James would appear in some way willing to retain part of the Old Testament by imposing restrictions on Christians.¹⁰²

It would be easy to fathom how some weaker Jewish brethren could be upset by the failure of Gentile believers to respect Jewish scruples when the two groups would be together. Even though the matter of chastity is a matter of morality and not just "ceremonial law," a better explanation for the inclusion of unchastity in the list of prohibitions is to take all four prohibitions as common Gentile practices that would be objectionable to Jewish scruples.¹⁰³ While *πορνεία* would be a sin even for the Gentile Christian, in this list it is in the same category as anything which would cause offense for a "weaker" Christian with scruples about certain matters. In other words, the Gentile Christians ought to be considerate of their Jewish brethren.

To test this explanation, let us see if the other three prohibitions take the form of "scruples" instead of "sins." Sacrificial meat, it is true, was related to idolatry. The

meat left over from idolatrous practices among the Gentiles, of course, is intrinsically "neutral." Gentile Christians might innocently use meat left from such practices, even though it would be unthinkable that they would commit idolatry.¹⁰⁴ For Jewish Christians, who were very scrupulous in avoiding idolatry, it might **appear** that the Gentile Christians were lax in regard to the First Commandment. Violations regarding blood and strangulation occurred with regard to undrained meat used in pagan idolatrous rites. Paul addresses this very issue in 1 Corinthians 8. There he points out that some Christians take offense at eating food previously offered to idols. These people are called "weak" Christians (1 Cor. 8:7). He indicates that the strong Christians can partake of such food in Christian liberty (v. 9) but they should refrain when it might become the occasion for a "brother to fall" (v. 13). Mindful of this pagan scene, Lenski comments:

Here were idol feasts, where they might both contaminate themselves and greatly hurt others; here was fornication which was nothing to pagans and liable still to seem to be nothing to pagan converts; here was the matter of blood in meat or otherwise which was nothing to them, nothing in fact, and yet still horrible to their Jewish brethren. The one safe course to follow was to avoid these things.¹⁰⁵

Idolatry and pagan practices associated with idolatry (strangulation and blood) were offensive to Jews, as were

also the pagan attitudes toward sex. In the Gentile world fornication was not viewed as immoral but as something amoral and natural. Unfortunately, it also could have happened that Gentile converts to Christianity occasionally brought with them their pagan lifestyles. Converts probably needed to be warned especially against fornication (see 1 Cor. 6:18). Thus, not only fornication but also pollutions of idols and food contaminated by strangling or being mixed with blood, all common Gentile practices, were repugnant for the Jew. They naturally had become issues of conscience for the Jewish Christian.¹⁰⁶

The Apostolic Decree most probably outlined a program of Christian liberty as applied to **ceremonial** matters and to issues relating to giving offense. Therefore, there were no real exceptions that could be held against the Gentile Christians. The council urged caution against an attitude that was careless or inconsiderate of fellow Christians who had scruples about certain common repugnant matters. The silence in regard to major outward symbols of Judaism in the Apostolic Decree, circumcision and sabbath observance, lends tacit support to a **total** declaration of the principle of Christian liberty without any exceptions. Although the matter of enforcing the law of circumcision precipitated the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:5), James' answer "is that we

should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God" (15:19). The context suggests the principle of freedom in all ceremonial matters (15:28-30). James confirmed that the will of God was that Gentiles should also be part of God's "house of David" (15:16), and he mentioned that Gentiles have always been a part of synagogue life (15:21--"For from early generations Moses has had in every city those who preach him, for he is read every sabbath in the synagogues.").¹⁰⁷ Since it has clearly been established that Gentiles could be part of the kingdom of God (15:7-9), James said that their inclusion in the kingdom was possible without the imposition of ceremonial regulations (15:10).

The imposition of ceremonies conflicts with the pure gospel of salvation by grace alone. Ceremonies are human works that distract from free grace. Peter emphasized the truth that salvation in the New Age was accomplished only through Jesus and therefore ceremonial regulations must take a back seat: "But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will" (Acts 15:11). The implications of Peter's words are far-reaching in terms of later historical developments in the first three Christian centuries.¹⁰⁸

The Apostolic Decree demonstrates that any uncertainty regarding Old Testament ceremonial observances among the

Apostolic Christians was once for all dispelled. If the break with the Old Testament was not yet complete and total at that time, the issue required attention. And it received it! Hans Conzelmann concurs that the Apostolic Council in its decision represented the final break with the Old Covenant in the mind of most Apostolic Christians: "The Apostolic decree sums up the Law as pointing to a permanent separation. The actual separation of the Church from the Temple and the Law is here shown to be possible and even in accordance with Scripture (xv, 16f.)."¹⁰⁹ Martin Franzmann also speaks of the Apostolic Council in his inimitable way:

Thus Christianity was safeguarded against a reimposition of the Law: the very real danger that Christianity might degenerate into a Judaic sect (and so perish with Judaism) was averted. And the unity of the church was preserved.¹¹⁰

Not to be denied is the fact that Christians, especially the converts from Judaism, were able to "shift gears" only with difficulty and thereby leave sabbath observance and much of their heritage behind them. Their past had been meaningful for them and so they probably were reticent to change. Undoubtedly many Jewish Christians considered themselves to be a sect within Judaism (Acts 24:5b). However, the resurrection marked a break with the Old Covenant. Christians began to see that the old ceremonies and rituals were no longer meaningful. Separate Christian worship,

uniquely defined with fellowship and the Lord's Supper, began to be customary.¹¹¹

One is justified in concluding that the principle of Christian liberty clearly resulting from the Jerusalem Council did not mandate that Sunday observance become normative.¹¹² The sabbath was not part of the Apostolic Decree. Therefore, the old sabbath was most probably not mandated because of the principle of freedom from the Old Covenant. No particular day for the worship gathering for the New Testament Age was designated as the sabbath's replacement.

Summary

Attitudes about the sabbath ensue from looking at Jesus' healing and teaching. The sabbath is seen as being redemptive. Christ did not abolish it but fulfilled the sabbath by putting Himself under it. He kept the whole law of God of the Old Testament but revealed the sham and hypocrisy connected with the Judaism of His day. Paul in Colossians, Galatians and Romans did not regard the old sabbath as being literally required of the New Testament Era. It had pointed to Christ. Christ fulfilled it. It no longer had binding force upon Christians. Indeed, if it should cause the pure Gospel of salvation by Christ alone to be compromised, the sabbath ought to be disregarded and considered unnecessary

since it could be potentially destructive of "faith alone."
 Similar conclusions were enunciated at the Jerusalem Council
 of Acts 15. Thus, a theological basis exists for the New
 Testament de-emphasis of sabbath and days.

ENDNOTES

¹Harald Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 118.

²Instead of "Ah!" at v. 34, the "Western" Codex Bezae (D) has: "Let us alone" (*ημας ωδε απολεσαι*).

³Frederick W. Danker explains, "With the citation of the final words uttered by the demon Luke tells the reader explicitly what Jesus' ultimate objective is--the destruction of Satan. Instead of 'Son of God' the demon says Holy One of God, a phrase similar to the one used by the widow in her description of Elisha. . . . The word holy contrasts with unclean in v. 33, and highlights the conflict." Jesus and the New Age (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1974), 62.

⁴Riesenfeld, 118, "Therefore deeds of healing on Sabbath days must be interpreted as signs that in the person of Jesus was being realized something of what the Sabbath had pointed forward to in the eschatological expectations of the Jewish people."

⁵Danker, 63.

⁶Paul Jewett, The Lord's Day (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 42, points out the implications of these sabbath healings for the New Age: "Hence we have in Jesus' healings on the Sabbath, not only acts of love, compassion and mercy, but true 'sabbatical acts,' acts which show that the Messianic Sabbath, the fulfillment of the Sabbath rest of the Old Testament, has broken into our world. Therefore the Sabbath, of all days, is the most appropriate for healing."

⁷Pharisees are mentioned in Matt. 12:2, Mark 2:24, and Luke 6:7 (with Scribes). Mark (3:6) reports that the Pharisees were in collusion with the Herodians, who were supporters of Herod Antipas, though they probably were not organized as a sect.

⁸William F. Arndt, Luke (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 177. Riesenfeld, 168, adds to our understanding: "However, it would be wrong to assert--as is not infrequently done in commentaries on the Gospels--that Jesus intended to adopt a

more generous and humane interpretation of the Jewish law, that he was a new, even more liberal, Hillel. In actual fact, there is nothing to indicate that on any occasion he wanted to take part in the discussion of Jewish law on its own level." Also see Harvey Falk, Jesus the Pharisee (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 158: "Jesus of Nazareth--according to our thesis--never wished to see his fellow Jews change one iota of their traditional faith. He himself remained an Orthodox Jew to his last moment. He only wished to see his people return to the teachings of the School of Hillel, which stressed love, humility, and the salvation of all mankind. His attacks on the Pharisees were directed against the School of Shammai, who were in control of the principal institutions of Judaism in his time." Rabbi Falk oversimplifies in his little book, but he does explain the tensions prevailing during the time of Jesus.

⁹Jacob Z. Lauterbach, ed., Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933-49), 3:198, Tractate Shabbata 15,16: Some work ". . . supersedes the laws of the Sabbath if it is done in protection of one's life." Also, see Lawrence H. Schiffman, The Halakhah at Qumran (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), 125. He suggests that there were "optimum" and "minimum" standards of the law to follow. For example, Mattathias made the decision to fight on the sabbath, apparently on the basis that preserving life was a "higher law" (1 Maccabees 2:41).

¹⁰Robert J. Banks, Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 125, comments: "The question therefore has rather a christological thrust. This would again be understood by Mark in terms of the extraordinary new principle that Christ was outlining. It was neither intended by Jesus as a casuistic justification for healing on the sabbath, nor as a programmatic setting aside of the sabbath law, but as a further call to decision with respect to his own person and work. . . . This also helps to explain why Jesus at his trial was not deemed *ενοχος θανάτου* by reason of his sabbath infringements and why the Pharisees were more concerned with his claims for himself than his attitude to the Law or tradition." J. Duncan M. Derrett in a careful analysis states that Dt. 30:7-10, 15-17 and Is. 56:1-7 are fulfilled by the miracle of the withered hand (cf. especially Mark 3:4 with Dt. 30:15); see "Christ and the Power of Choice (Mark 3,1-6)," Biblica 65 (1984): 168-88.

¹¹Eduard Lohse, σάββατον, κτλ, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-74), 7:24 (hereafter TDNT): "According to a generally accepted Halakah it was permissible to help a sick man on the Sabbath only when there was imminent danger of death."

¹²Banks, 131, argues that "there is nothing to support the view that abrogation of the sabbath was at the heart of his teaching, nor even that he was approving occasional breaches of the sabbath law in the face of some special need. More adequate is the claim that his authority over it was employed to bring to realisation its original and fundamental purpose. What Jesus, in fact, takes up, however, is not a particular orientation towards the sabbath-law, but the demand that the sabbath be oriented towards, interpreted by, and obeyed in accordance with, his own person and work. This is far more than a return to the original purpose of the sabbath in creation, for it is linked with the re-creation of man that is taking place through his own ministry. The real issue that is constantly brought forward in his teaching is not so much that of his keeping or not keeping the Law, or of the relationship of his teaching to it. It is the failure of his opponents to realise that his presence has inaugurated a new situation with respect to the things of God, and that it is no longer the Law but his own teaching that is decisive."

¹³There were 39 types of forbidden sabbath activities. Apparently feeding animals was prohibited, but watering them was permitted as a necessity. See Lohse, 12.

¹⁴Cf. John 9:4, "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night comes when no one can work." The sabbath setting is also noted at John 7:22-23 as the Mosaic injunction for the time of circumcision.

¹⁵RSV: "is working still"; NIV: "is always at work to this very day."

¹⁶C. F. D. Moule, An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 85. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 374, also translates "till now."

¹⁷F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, Philo, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 1.149, Legum Allegoria, 1.5.

¹⁸B. F. Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, repr. 1981), 84.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 322.

²²Westcott, 84.

²³Oscar Cullmann, "Sabbat und Sonntag nach dem Johannes-evangelium," In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1951), 128.

²⁴Ibid., 130.

²⁵Ibid., 129.

²⁶Ibid., 130.

²⁷Willy Rordorf, Sunday, trans. A. A. K. Graham (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), 100, is careful to argue that Christ in His ministry abolished the Sabbath for Himself: "Jesus derives for himself the abrogation of the commandment to rest on the weekly sabbath from the eschatological interpretation of Gen. 2.2f." Then he presents the typical *Gemeindebildung* view (that later events influenced the Evangelists' writings): "Nowhere else in Jesus' sayings, however, do we find one like this which speaks of the future sabbath of God. It would seem that the evangelist wanted to give a christological basis to the tradition (in itself a Jewish tradition) about God's activity until the end of the world; after that the promised sabbath, the blessed rest, was supposed to begin. Finally, John 5:17 represents the intersection of these two traditions: with messianic authority Jesus applies to himself the idea of God's activity and rest, and so he places himself above the sabbath commandment."

²⁸Lenski, John, 377.

²⁹Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), 42-47.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 47. See also Lohse, 14, for discussion of exceptions to the prohibition of work that superseded the sabbath. Circumcision would be one of the lawful activities, for that should take place even when the eighth day for circumcision fell on a sabbath.

³¹Bacchiocchi, 44.

³²From Matthew and Mark we know definitely that it was a sabbath setting. Some manuscripts describe the Lukan setting as ἐν σαββάτῳ δευτεροπρώτῳ. This incomprehensible reading is rejected by Bruce M. Metzger in his A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), 139, where it is called a *vox nulla*; and by Arndt, 174, where he calls it a "celebrated controversy." Both explain it as a copyist error. With regard to Matthew, many interpreters take the ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ at 12:1 as transitional, connecting the sabbath rest material of 11:28-30 with this sabbath pericope. See, e.g., Rordorf, 109; Jean Daniélou, The Bible and the Liturgy (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 226; Ernst Jenni, Die Theologische Begründung des Sabbatgebotes im Alten Testament (Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1955), 39, n. 23; and Daniel Patte, The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 167. Patte observes, "In 12:1-21 Matthew continues to develop the themes of 11:25-30, . . . This continuity is marked by the opening phrase, 'at that time,' which is used by Matthew along with other temporal notations to underscore that the following passage further develops the themes of the preceding pericope . . . these controversies provide a concrete illustration of the way in which the Pharisees make the day of rest a burden and of the way in which Jesus makes the observance of the sabbath an easy yoke and a light burden."

³³Rordorf, 61, comments on their hunger: (1) If they were hungry it was their own fault for "not having prepared their meals on the previous day as everyone else"; (2) "they could have fasted for the whole day"; (3) they were not "in danger of life through sheer exhaustion." It appears that they were guiltless (12:7).

³⁴Lohse, 12.

³⁵Ibid., 13-14. Lohse mentions a "sabbath day's journey" as being 2000 cubits, which could be evaded by "changing boundaries" and "changing courts" (the "erub"). Schiffman, 91, presents the Qumran length for the sabbath day journey as 1000 cubits.

³⁶In the narrative of David's eating the Showbread, the priest also acted in a forbidden manner by giving to David to eat. An identification of Jesus is possible to this effect: Our priest is here. He is the church's new David (cf. Psalm 110); Jesus is a kind of Melchizedek figure Who was not a Levite. Jesus and David were of the tribe of Judah.

³⁷Etan Levine, "The Sabbath Controversy According to Matthew," New Testament Studies 22 (1976): 480-83. This study suggests that Jesus' company knew fully well that the priests "worked" on the sabbath and their activity was legitimate just as they knew their own activity was illegal. Jesus forced the Pharisees into admitting that they permitted a breaking of the law. The Pharisees permitted grain gathering for the wave-offering, even if on a sabbath; the Sadducees did not. Against Levine, we ask whether it can be shown that the gathering was for the wave-offering.

³⁸Banks, 131. Banks perceptively describes how Jesus' Christological claim in connection with the sabbath exceeds the Pharisees' shallow view of it. Rabbinical discussions (subsequent to Jesus and in support of His position) defend David by arguing that the Law broken by David was in fact not a Sabbath Law. M. Casey has effectively argued that any classification of Laws into Sabbath and non-Sabbath Laws would be contrary to the nature of Jewish halakhah: "[Yalqut Shim'oni II, 130] clearly does not function in accordance with that kind of analysis: the point is to find a general principle to justify David's action, and since the narrative is placed on the Sabbath, Sabbath Law is perfectly satisfactory. Just as Jesus was able to create a difficulty for the Pharisaic position by arguing that David had (on the Sabbath) breached what was not obviously a Sabbath Law, so the Yalqut was able to justify his action (in breaching what was not obviously a Sabbath Law) by means of an overtly Sabbath regulation. . . ." However, at the time of Jesus the Pharisaic "orthodox life-stance had not yet produced a well-known answer to the problem which Jesus raised for it." See

Maurice Casey, "The Plucking of the Grain (Mark 2.23-28)," New Testament Studies 34 (1988): 11,13.

³⁹Riesenfeld, 119, n. 10. "In the passage about the plucking of the ears of corn, as in the accounts of the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:41 and parallels; 8:6 and parallel), appear expressions for the distribution and receiving of the bread which are identical with the terms used in the accounts of the institution of the Last Supper. Especially in Luke's version (6:4) of the story of the plucking of the ears of corn does the reference to the behavior of Abimelech (identified as Abiathar in Mark 2:26) use such expressions."

⁴⁰Ernst Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes (London: SCM Press, 1965), 38-39. He explains his view that the reason the other Synoptists omitted this verse is because the rigidly-bound Christian community was not ready to allow the freedom implied by that verse to all. According to him, the next verse ("The Son of man is even Lord of the sabbath.") was meant to weaken and limit the former. So also Rordorf, 65.

⁴¹Rordorf, 63. "The Jews' conviction that it was their duty legally to observe the sabbath had the effect of placing the sabbath above human beings."

⁴²Moule, 55, "prospective, with a view to, for the sake of."

⁴³A problematical agraphon shows up in Luke 6 between vv. 4 and 5, usually discounted because it appears to be a casuistic interpolation intended to soften the supposed abrogation of the sabbath and because of its Western textual tradition. It reads, "On the same day he saw a man working on the sabbath and said to him, 'Man, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; but if you do not know, you are accursed and a transgressor of the law.'" Arndt, 175, remarks, "The old Sabbath was by the Apostles to be declared abrogated, a statute having possessed validity merely for the period of the Mosaic dispensation. Whoever realized that the days of the Old Covenant were numbered could consider himself freed of its special provisions. Without such realization a violation of conscience was involved. I believe the story to be true" See also Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 140.

⁴⁴The Greek emphasizes the "Lord," implying that Christ created both man and the sabbath:

Matt. - κύριος γάρ ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Mark - ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου.

Luke - κύριός ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

⁴⁵Aramaic: ܡܠܝܚܐ as in Dan. 7:13. James W. Leitch, "Lord Also of the Sabbath," Scottish Journal of Theology 19 (1966): 427, argues that the "Son of man" has to be Jesus and not man in general, because after the Fall, man being in a state of sin could not have dominion over the sabbath.

⁴⁶Oscar Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, trans. A. Steward Todd and James B. Torrance (London: SCM Press, 1966), 88-89, explains that the entire phrase υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου was intentionally employed since Mark could have just said "man." There can be no doubt that Mark was thinking only of Jesus by this phrase.

⁴⁷Riesenfeld, 121.

⁴⁸Werner Georg Kümmel, Promise and Fulfilment, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (London: SCM Press, 1957), 46, argues ". . . that Jesus applied this veiled ascription of sovereignty to himself is shown indubitably by Mark 2.10, 28 and Matt. 8.20; 11.19."

⁴⁹Paul S. Minear. The Gospel According to Mark (St. Louis: Concordia, 1969), 62. Bacchiocchi, 62, "Some may ask, how can the instituting of the Sabbath for man's benefit constitute the ground of Christ's lordship over the day? The answer is found in the fact that the Son of God instituted the Sabbath to ensure his well-being. Ultimately, therefore, Christ's lordship over the Sabbath represents His authority over man himself."

⁵⁰Arndt, 174.

⁵¹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 130: "The idea that 'lord of the Sabbath' means so superior to the Sabbath that he can do what he pleases on the Sabbath, or let his disciples do what is contrary to the divine Sabbath law, is the very opposite of what Jesus means. Jesus was under the law, Gal. 4:4, which included the ceremonial law and thus

'also' (καί) the Sabbath law. Throughout his life he faithfully observed all of this law. The Sabbath desecrations with which the Jews charged him were violations only of the man-made Pharisaical regulations which were contrary to the divine law. But in the Son of man and in his fulfillment of the law the whole ceremonial law would attain its divinely intended purpose and would thus eventually drop away as being no longer needed."

⁵²With regard to these pericopes, it may be significant that Matt. 12:1-8 appears after the invitation to those weighted down by the law (11:28-30). Mark 2:23-28 occurs after the message about new wineskins (2:18-21), as also Luke 6:1-5 is placed after the wineskins of Luke 5:33-39. In the latter cases, Jesus is presented as that which is new. In their own ways, the Evangelists present Jesus as the "Fulfillment."

⁵³Lenski, Mark, 130, "He who as 'lord' thus stood at the top of all these laws and institutions was now here to fulfill all that they meant. That is why he calls himself 'the Son of man,' he who is man and yet more than man, the incarnate Son, the Messiah. He who with the Father as the Son of Yahweh himself had instituted the Sabbath with its religious observances for man's benefit was now here to honor the Sabbath and to do this by fulfilling the divine Sabbath law."

⁵⁴Moule, 144, "That ὥστε is also, in certain contexts, simply an inferential particle as if ὡς τε, meaning *and so, accordingly, etc.*; e.g.: . . .Mark ii.28 . . ."

⁵⁵Banks, 117, "it is a question of authority rather than legality as such which is at stake."

⁵⁶Hence, Christ fulfilled it instead of abolishing it. Viz. Patte, 171.

⁵⁷Lenski, Mark, 131, "Jesus was (not) already abrogating the Jewish Sabbath After Pentecost, led by the Spirit, the apostles and the church would in perfect Christian liberty choose a day for the divine public worship, but not as another law and Sabbath but only as a free expression of their desire to use the Word in public as the Lord bade them and unitedly and in proper order to worship the Lord."

⁵⁸Miner, 63.

⁵⁹Various "factions" must have influenced Jewish and Gentile Christians in Colossae, necessitating Paul's pleading on behalf of the truth and singularity of the Gospel since all were one in Christ (3:11, neither "Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man . . ."). Innuendos hinting at gnosticism emphasize that real γνώσις was possible only in Christ (οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοί, 2:3). Some kind of "enlightenment religion" might have been introduced "to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (ἐν τῷ φωτί, 1:12). Attraction to worldly dominion is referred to at 1:13 ("delivered from the dominion of darkness"). There is also a reference to pagan attraction to "elemental spirits of the universe" (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου).

⁶⁰Gerhard Delling, στοιχείον, TDNT, 7:685-86, "Fundamentally the use of στοιχείον in Col. 2 is to be regarded as independent of the use in G.4." And, "In Col. 2, then, Paul can use the same expression as in G. 4. For the reference is again to religion before and outside Christ, and the same judgment falls on this. At best it is only a shadow of the fulfillment ([Col.]2:17), and in fact it proves to be a deception when the one who believes in Christ thinks his existence can be supported by its ordinances (2:8) . . ."

⁶¹Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 452-53 (hereafter cited as BAG). Briefly, the word κρίνω can mean (1) distinguish, (2) consider, (3) decide, (4) condemn, (5) see that justice is done, and (6) judge and pass an unfavorable judgment upon. For this last possibility, Col 2:16 is cited.

⁶²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 123. He also considers it a matter of human regulations about when to eat, drink, and fast, rather than about proper and improper foods, clean and unclean.

⁶³BAG, 506-7.

⁶⁴A similar grouping occurs in Gal. 4:10.

⁶⁵F. F. Bruce, with E. K. Simpson, Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 166, concludes that the heresy was basically Jewish-oriented and one which had undergone "a remarkable fusion with a philosophy of non-Jewish origin." On such syncretistic soil, for example, Bruce cites the unusual case where a Jewish lady could be both honorary ruler of the synagogue and priestess of the imperial cult.

⁶⁶The common assumption of most commentators, to which we also subscribe, is that the errorists in Colossae were imposing various regulations, among which some had a Jewish origin. However, D. R. De Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," in From Sabbath to Lord's Day, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 182, suggests that the errorists were ascetics who objected to the Christians' observance of ceremonial matters, including the sabbath. J. B. Lightfoot, Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1879, repr. 1981), 193, seems to agree that they were ascetics when he points out that the "rigour of the Colossian false teachers . . . went far beyond the injunctions of the Law. It is probable that they forbade wine and animal food altogether. . . ." Another view advanced is that the Ascetics regarded special days, etc., as homage to the stars rather than that those practices stemmed from Jewish influence. Thus, Eduard Lohse, Colossians and Philemon, Hermeneia Series, trans. William B. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karis, ed. Helmut Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 115, states, "In the context of Col, however, the command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath is not based on the Torah according to which Israel received the sabbath as a sign of her election from among the nations. Rather the sacred days must be kept for the sake of the 'elements of the universe,' who direct the course of the stars and thus also prescribe minutely the order of the calendar."

⁶⁷Bacchiocchi, 364, defends the position that the crux is not that the sabbath was being retained (for he believes it was yet), but the problem was **how** these five various rituals were being observed. For him, Paul was criticizing the manner and motivation. Yet, it seems that the point still remains the same whether Paul is referring to sabbath days or to the manner of keeping such days, namely that such

special days have no intrinsic merit and can undermine salvation by "Christ alone."

⁶⁸It is possible that the contrast of shadow and body derived from Plato (cf. *Republic* 7.514-7; 10.596; *Timaeus* 46c; 71b).

⁶⁹If Paul is reacting against a religion that honors the elements of the universe (Col. 2:8,20), as some commentators believe (viz. n. 66 *supra*), then the sabbath days, etc., would not necessarily carry typological value; whereas, if the shadows refer to Jewish ceremonies, however modified at Colossae, they could easily serve as types of Christ. This lends weight then to understanding the regulations in 2:14 as being Jewish. On this matter, Gerhard Kittel, *TDNT*, 2:23, states: "The usage of Hellenistic Judaism would thus refer the τοῖς δόγμασιν to the Mosaic Law and its demands as the content of the χειρόγραφον. . . . The construction and train of thought are much the same in Eph. 2:15, namely, that the Mosaic νόμος τῶν ἐντολῶν, which consists in δόγματα, is set aside by Christ."

⁷⁰It is not adversative, per Lenski, *Colossians*, 119.

⁷¹For popular treatments see Otto Sohn, *What's the Answer?* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960); Theodore Graebner, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956); Lorenz Wunderlich, "Adiaphora," *Abiding Word*, 3 vols (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), 2:686-708.

⁷²Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 61, persuasively reconstructs the view that the "Judaizers" of Galatia were representatives sent from James to Antioch.

⁷³Rordorf, 109.

⁷⁴Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 6, presents possibilities of identifying the οἱ περιτεμνόμενοι of 6:13 by asking, "Is this simply a name for 'the Jews' (i.e. Jewish Christians), or does it point to Gentile Christians who have already undergone circumcision themselves (i.e., 'Judaizers')?"

⁷⁵Robert Jewett, "The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation," *New Testament Studies* 17 (1970-71): 198-212,

argues persuasively that the Galatian agitators were Jewish Christians from Judea who "were stimulated by Zealotic pressure into a nomistic campaign among their fellow Christians in the late forties and early fifties. Their goal was to avert the suspicion that they were in communion with lawless Gentiles. It appears that the Judean Christians convinced themselves that circumcision of Gentile Christians would thwart Zealot reprisals" (p. 205).

⁷⁶Alfred Wikenhauser, New Testament Introduction (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), 378.

⁷⁷Betz, 8-9.

⁷⁸Ibid., 217, explains the present tense with the remark that, ". . . Paul describes the typical behavior of religiously scrupulous people."

⁷⁹Ibid., 258.

⁸⁰See 2:19, "For I through the law died to the law . . ."; 3:25, "now that faith has come"; 4:3, "when we were children, we were slaves"; 4:8, "Formerly [*Ἀλλὰ τότε μὲν*] . . . you were in bondage"; 4:31; 5:4, "you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace"; 5:6, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith . . ."; 5:13, "you were called to freedom (*ἐπ' ἐλευθερία*)"; 6:15, circumcision does not mean anything, "but a new creation" is what matters.

⁸¹Paul may have preferred the more general terminology because he was suggesting that the gentile Galatians were keeping days, etc. like "good Jews." Raymond T. Stamm, "The Epistle to the Galatians," The Interpreter's Bible, 12 vols., ed. George A. Buttrick (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952), 10:532, "There can be no doubt that Paul was referring especially to the Jewish calendar, with its yearly cycle of observances; but customs carried over from the Gentile cults were also included." He may also have been scorning the way they were scrupulously keeping (*παρατηρήσθε*) these calendar observances, rather than joyfully celebrating these feasts. See Otto Schmoller, "The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians," Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, trans. and ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 106, "*παρατηρήσθε*: to observe carefully, not to celebrate, or else the objects would have been *σάββατα, νεομηνίας, ἑορτάς*. The

Apostle means to say, that they were not only given to the celebration, but, precisely like the Jews, were already scrupulous also as to the correct reckoning of time for their holy days. Days, with reference to the Sabbath; months, probably with reference to the new moons, not because certain months, the seventh especially, were regarded as peculiarly holy months; seasons, within the year, with reference to the feasts; years with reference to the Sabbatical year, not the year of jubilee, which was no longer celebrated." John Bligh, Galatians (London: St. Paul Publications, 1969), 373, suggests that the lack of explicit reference to the sabbath arises because by this time there was widespread acceptance among the Gentiles of the sabbath and therefore it was not a distinguishing mark of Judaism. Paul did not want to upset the custom of meeting on the sabbath for Christian worship."

⁸²So, does ἡμέρας mean the sabbath? We conclude positively on the basis of the following. 1. The catenation of observances resembles other similar ones as Col. 2:16 where the sabbath is definitely mentioned; 2. The verb παρατηρήσθε suggests observance of a sabbath; 3. V.9 clearly refers to Mosaic regulations because that is in fact what Paul is describing. Paul borrowed στοιχείον from pagan elements and used it to describe Jewish elements (viz. Delling TDNT, 7:842, "στοιχεία τοῦ κόσμου in G. 4 is on the one side the Torah with its statutes . . . on the other side the world of false gods . . ."). In agreement is Albrecht Oepke, Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1957), 103, "Nicht um 'Tagewählerei' kann es sich handeln, sondern nur um den offiziellen jüdischen Festkalender. Diesen sind die Galater im Begriff anzunehmen (παρατηρήσθε einfaches Prä-s oder de conatu?): Tage, vor allem den Sabbat, dann Versöhnungstag . . ." The term for him refers primarily to the sabbath and then perhaps to other Jewish observances. However, Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 206, adds pagan observance after the sabbath as his first choice: "dann ist es fraglich, ob man bei den ἡμέραι nur an Sabbate und sonstige mosaische Feiertage zu denken hat. Man könnte z.B. auch an die vier Schalttage denken . . . oder auch an andere im Zusammenhänge mit astronomischen Theorien oder superstitiösen Anschauungen wichtige Tage."

⁸³Wikenhauser, 403, asserts that the majority of Roman Christians were Gentiles, with a Jewish minority. This is a common view. Francis Watson, 97, thinks that Romans 14 is

addressed to two congregations in Rome who regard each other with suspicion, one being primarily Gentile, the other primarily Jewish. Rom. 15:7 particularly is viewed by him as proof that Paul wanted them to be in harmony with each other.

⁸⁴This term is used of unclean food according to Jewish law in Acts 10:14,28; 11:8. In Rom. 14:20, πάντα μὲν καθάρᾳ is equivalent to οὐδὲν κοινόν in v. 14; as also Acts 10:15 & 11:9.

⁸⁵After Paul mentions that judgment should not be passed because of scruples about food (14:1-4) he continues with the reference to days in vv. 5-6, introduced by a γὰρ. This has seemed awkward; hence, the varying textual support for γὰρ. D. R. De Lacey, 182, aptly asserts, "Paul will then be saying to the church that *just as they accept differing practices over 'days,' so also they should entertain differing practices over 'meats.'* It is then easy to see why 'days' form no further part of the discussion."

⁸⁶C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 713. Paul identifies himself with the "strong."

⁸⁷Watson, 95, "The main difficulty in identifying the 'weak' with straightforward Jewish Christians who observed the law is that according to 14:2 they abstained not simply from pork, but from meat and wine (14:21)." Watson offers this solution, "In all these examples, [mentioned in his article] Jews are in a Gentile environment, cut off from their community, in which ceremonially pure meat and wine might be obtained, and this suggests a plausible interpretation of the 'weak' in Rom. 14."

⁸⁸William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, repr. 1952), 387.

⁸⁹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 821.

⁹⁰Cranfield, 705, points out that the word "days" could mean (1) days of abstinence, (2) days of OT ceremonialism, or (3) lucky and unlucky days. He prefers #2.

⁹¹See 1 Cor. 10:14-33.

⁹²See the illuminating study by Martin Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968), in which he argues that Stephen's Samaritanism is what angered the establishment at Jerusalem.

⁹³The New Testament yoke is easy (Matt. 11:29). We cannot bear the Old Testament yoke (Acts 15:10).

⁹⁴James quotes the LXX version of Amos 9:11-12 (Acts 15:16-18). The point is that the church is the new dwelling of David, and it is God's plan to include Gentiles. Jewish regulations do not apply to these new people of God.

⁹⁵See 1 Cor. 8:9, 1 Cor. 10:25, & Rom. 14:1-17 for similar expressions of concern for the "weak," or spiritually immature.

⁹⁶The poor were also to be remembered, according to Gal. 2:10. The question is unsettled whether Galatians 2 refers to Acts 11 or 15. The dimensions of the problem regarding the relationship between Acts 11 & 15 and Galatians 2 are explained in F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds, The Beginnings of Christianity, 5 vols. (New York and London: Macmillan & Co., 1920-33), 2:266-85. They conclude that Galatians was written at the close of the first missionary journey and that Acts 11 and Galatians 2 refer to the same events. See also 5:199-204. Perhaps the best concise review is Robert G. Hoerber, "Galatians 2:1-10 and the Acts of the Apostles," Concordia Theological Monthly 31 (August 1960): 482-91.

⁹⁷S. G. Wilson, Luke and the Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 84-85, shows how Leviticus 17 & 18 cannot be compared with Acts 15: (1) Leviticus 17 & 18 are not rules for the *ger toshab*; (2) Judaism would not have seen Leviticus 17 & 18 as relevant to Gentile Christians unless they had been Jewish proselytes earlier; and (3) there is no evidence that first century Judaism required the decrees of Leviticus 17 & 18 for either proselytes or Godfearers.

⁹⁸This interpretation enables four categories in Leviticus: (1) 17:7 - sacrifices for satyrs ("pollutions of idols"); (2) 18:6-23 - forbidden degrees ("unchastity");

(3) 17:10 - eats blood ("what is strangled"); and (4) 17:13 - undrained blood ("from blood").

⁹⁹This view would be compatible with modern Seventh-Day Adventists who maintain the validity of the Old Testament ceremonial law for today. If the sabbath were retained by Jewish Christians, it was from habit and precedent rather than by precept, however. Modern Sunday Sabbatarians advocate Sunday observance on the basis that its authority derives from moral law (the Decalogue).

¹⁰⁰R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 613.

¹⁰¹It seems to be the nature of the "weak" party in such issues to expect the "stronger" to yield in their freedom and not give offense. Paul indicted that he was willing to yield to the weak Christian for the sake of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-23). He was willing to submit to the weaker brethren for the sake of Christian love when no principles were at stake (see Rom. 14:13), but when principles were at stake, he would not budge (cf. Gal. 4:10-11; Col. 2:16-19).

¹⁰²Friedrich Büchsel, εἰδωλόθυτον, TDNT, 2:378-79. Jewish strictness about such foods "reflects the resolute resistance of Judaism to any kind of religious syncretism."

¹⁰³Another possibility, though not a serious option, exists for explaining the four prohibitions. If the "strangulation" (Acts 15:20, καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ) is deleted, per Codex Beza (D), then the remark of James could be a circumlocution for idolatry, adultery, and murder, all of which violate the moral code. There is a tradition of the so-called Noachide laws that reflect general morality, forbidding those very three things (see Gen. 9:4-7). We dismiss this and other suggestions since textual emendations are all rather dubious in this verse. See the treatment by Bruce Metzger, 429-34.

¹⁰⁴Wilson, 95, "Pertinent, too, is the observation that the two main speeches addressed to Gentiles (Ac. 14:15f; 17:22f) concern themselves above all with the contrast between the vain, idolatrous worship of pagan gods and worship of the one true God. Luke thus indicates that idolatry

was the hallmark of a Gentile and the main feature of his life which would have to change."

¹⁰⁵Lenski, Acts, 617.

¹⁰⁶Wilson, 98-99.

¹⁰⁷This verse could also mean that Jews lived in many cities and therefore Gentile converts should be considerate of Jewish Christians, there being so many of them living in so many different places, converting from Judaism. Also, it could mean that many were familiar with Mosaic law and customs, there being so many synagogues located in so many places. See I. H. Marshall, The Acts of the Apostles (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 254, where he explains all possible interpretations.

¹⁰⁸See the conclusion of this paper, summarizing developments up to A.D. 321.

¹⁰⁹Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 147.

¹¹⁰Martin H. Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), 52.

¹¹¹Acts 1:13; 2:46; and maybe 20:7.

¹¹²We do not agree with Rordorf, 219, who assumes that Sunday worship in the Apostolic church became universally normative and that is why the Scriptures are silent regarding the day of worship. Of course, he says this to be able to defend his thesis that Sunday observance reaches back to the resurrection of Christ. It seems more realistic to consider that the silence on which day to worship can be explained on the grounds that before the Apostolic Council there was a hesitancy to change. Sabbath observance was common enough among Christians so that the criticism of Jews and Judaizers was not incurred. If **Sunday** were uniformly observed among Christians circa A.D. 49, we will conjecture that the criticism of nomistic Judaizers would surely have been heard. Martin Scharlemann, 123, concurs: "Nowhere does the apostle [Paul] repudiate the temple and its cult. Its theological significance for him may have evaporated in time, especially after he had brought the gift of the 'nations' to Jerusalem and was taken to Rome as a prisoner. Even before this, how-

ever, he had seen that the Christian community did in fact supersede the physical edifice in Jerusalem as the locale of God's presence." Also, among many others, Banks, 119, acknowledges the practice of sabbath observance: "The practice of the early Christian communities in tolerating observance of the sabbath does not suggest that the radical implications of Jesus' statement [the sabbath was made for man] were everywhere evident (cf. Rom. 14.5ff; Gal. 4.10; Col. 2.16ff.)"

. . . continued observance of the sabbath, though not perhaps the ideal, was permissible."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The sabbath was probably not mandated by Christendom as a result of a sense of freedom from Old Testament ceremonial law. This sense of freedom arose from an understanding that Christ was the Antitype, the fulfillment of the Old Testament sabbath type. Christians came to understand that the creation of any legislation regarding a particular day for worship gatherings was inimical to the Gospel which proclaimed Christ alone. Worship in the New Testament Age emphasizes Christ, not a day.

Post-Biblical Developments

The sense of freedom from the Old Covenant that included freedom from sabbath observance nevertheless remained an undecided issue following the Apostolic Age.

R. J. Bauckham describes this development:

Did Gentile Christians in the second century observe the Sabbath? Although, as we shall see, the dominant trend of second-century Christianity was toward a forthright rejection of Sabbath observance along with Jewish practices in general, we must also reckon with a continuing influence of Jewish Christianity in some parts of the church that promoted judaizing tendencies.¹

Willy Rordorf suggests Christians no longer took part in the sabbath worship in the synagogues both because of discrimination against them by Jews and because they were no longer satisfied by Jewish worship since it lacked any reference to the risen Lord.² The change away from the sabbath is seen in several instances. A brief historical sketch will illustrate post-Biblical developments.

A definite difference between Christians and Jews is apparent from the *Didache* (usually dated ca. A.D. 90-110), in which Jews are called the "hypocrites": "Let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on Mondays and Thursdays, but do you fast on Wednesdays and Fridays" (8:1).³ This same document also suggests the idea that a certain day was regarded as the regular day of worship by the Christians at that time. While the Greek is oblique in this passage, the thought seems to be that a certain day was regarded as the regular day of worship by Christians. *Didache* 14.1 reads, ". . . on the Lord's Day of the Lord (κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου συναχθέντες)⁴ come together, break bread (κλάσατε ἄρτον) and hold Eucharist (καὶ εὐχαριστήσατε)."⁵

Ignatius' *Letter to the Magnesians* 9.1 (ob. ca. A.D. 110) advises against "sabbatizing," which apparently was a temptation for certain Asian Minor Christians. Ignatius describes converts from Judaism in this vignette:

If then they who walked in ancient customs came to a new hope, no longer living for the Sabbath (μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες), but for the Lord's Day (κατὰ κυριακὴν ζῶντες), on which also our life sprang up through him and his death . . .⁶

To sabbatize was clearly to represent Judaism, and "to live for the Lord's Day" meant accepting the death and resurrection of Christ for salvation. Thus Ignatius is an early witness to the necessity of breaking away from the sabbath, which for him was a "badge of a false attitude to Jesus Christ."⁷ Ignatius thought that there must be a Christian dissociation from Judaism.

One more early witness which pleads for a departure from keeping the sabbath is the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ca. 130-135).⁸ In his argument Barnabas refers to the Decalogue in Chapter 14, at the end (14.9) of which he quotes Is. 61:1-2 in support of the express mission of Christ as having come to bring the Gospel to all nations. Then he proceeds (Chapter 15) to state that the Decalogue was meant also for Christians but promises that no one is able to keep it perfectly: "If, then, anyone has at present the power to keep holy the day which God has made holy, by being pure in heart, we are altogether deceived."⁹ He continues by explaining that no one can keep it holy unless they are themselves holy. He argues that for God,

the present sabbaths (τὰ νῦν σάββατα) are not acceptable to me, but that which I have made, in which I will give rest

to all things and make the beginning of an eighth day (ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ὀγδόης) that is the beginning of another world. Wherefore we also celebrate with gladness the eighth day in which Jesus also rose from the dead . . .¹⁰

Obedience to the sabbath commandment has nothing to do with the day of the week or with physical rest, but is a matter of holy living in the future sabbath age that God has made holy. For Barnabas the Third Commandment points to Christians' joyful worship celebration made meaningful with reference to the resurrection and hope of future consummation.

Another historical witness to a separation from Judaism occurs in the correspondence (ca. A.D. 112) between Pliny and Trajan.¹¹ Pliny was the governor of the province of Bithynia in Asia Minor (confirmed by Justin, fl. 2nd century, ca. A.D. 152) and relates how Christians were unlawfully gathering for evening meetings and "seditious assemblies" (*hetaeriae*).¹² Pliny probably knew that Christians generally received the state's opprobrium, but he did not quite know how to handle the problem of what to do with Christians. Pliny's letter is important for this study by reason of his report that Christians met on a certain day (*stato die*).¹³ By that time there was evidently in Bithynia a day selected for worship. The letter identifies morning as the time for worship. The change of time away from evening meetings surely resulted from the ordinance against unlawful meeting times (already alluded to). After this time the patristic literature more

consistently describes the agape feasts in the evenings as separated from the Lord's Supper/synaxis and worship on Sunday mornings. The synaxis was probably early in the morning in deference to employment and to avoid legal discouragements.

Sunday is emerging as the day of worship. By making the first day of the week a day of rest the Constantinian decrees of A.D. 321 finally provided relief for Christians who found it difficult to enjoy leisure time for worship. It also cannot be denied that this was a humanitarian act for the Empire. Rordorf summarizes this development of a civil observance of Sunday:

A glance into the history of Christian legislation about Sunday shows us that through the centuries the Church has been living on the heritage of the post-Constantinian period. Even today we still live in it: even today we still have the Sunday rest, and even today the sabbath commandment plays an important part in the theoretical and practical justification by Christians of the rest from work on Sunday.¹⁴

What We Have Learned

1. No mandates requiring the observance of certain days for worship, much less for rest, are given in the New Testament.
2. The nature of worship for the New Testament Age is one of total consecration and devotion to God. It is not confined to external regulations and ceremonies, although

Christians ought to assemble corporately for worship. Corporate gatherings are still necessary in the Gospel Era, without any importance being attached to a particular day.

3. The concept of rest offered in the Gospel is not tied to a day but is under the promise of Christ. Rest is not earned by works but is received by faith in Christ as His gift to the believer. The necessity of rest, especially one day in seven, is not a creation ordinance.

4. The Old Sabbath consisting of rest and worship was not directly abolished anywhere in the New Testament, but it came to be obsolescent, arising from the view of Christ as being the One to Whom the sabbath pointed. The Old Testament sabbath was a type and Christ is its antitype. Therefore, it is no longer necessary since it belongs to the Old Covenant. In the Gospel Age there is no need for a day, such as Sunday, to be adopted either because of the Third Commandment's demands or as a type of the sabbath to come.

5. Jesus showed in His healing and teaching ministry that He fulfilled the sabbath's intentions. He submitted Himself to it and did not place Himself above it, for He kept the whole law fully and perfectly, including the ceremonial law. Hence, he did not suspend the sabbath or abolish it.

6. The principle of Christian liberty should always be maintained, lest ceremonies overshadow "Christ alone" and become paths to "salvation by works."

The Lutheran Confessions

The Augsburg Confession recognizes that the Old Testament sabbath was abrogated on the principle of Christian liberty. Sunday was not the fulfillment of the Third Commandment; only Christ was its fulfillment. The formulator of the Augsburg Confession realized that there was no theological justification for satisfying the requirements of the Third Commandment by observing Sunday in an Old Testament way. Further, strict Sunday observance could lead to work-righteousness. As a matter of fact, the Lutherans maintained that every day is the Lord's day, not just one of seven in a week (Large Catechism 87; 89).¹⁵

Lutherans maintained the custom of worshipping on Sunday for the sake of good order, and Sunday had the support of civil legislation in most areas. The Lutheran Reformers were careful to allow the abrogation of the sabbath only on the basis of Christian liberty. They were not compelled to exalt Sunday since no New Testament precepts clearly direct worship to be on a particular day.

A Final Note

In the final analysis, the requirement of the Third Commandment is not to keep a day holy but to keep Christ holy. That is why there are no rules about days for corporate worship gatherings in the New Testament. Faithful obedience cannot be legislated. Our desire to worship does not derive from a law, but from a relationship. If we love Him because He first loved us, then we will worship Christ together with His whole body, the Church.

Modern advocates of sabbath-keeping fail to see that the Old Testament sabbath was a temporary type pointing to Christ and awaiting fulfillment by Him. Now after the fulfillment, it is legalistic and judaizing to try to honor the seventh day or first day ("eighth day") of the week as a New Testament ordinance.

Lutherans are not libertines to the extent of minimizing worship gatherings. They do not advocate "staying home" on Sundays, nor is Sunday devoid of meaning. Christians do appreciate the customary civil day of rest, as a day allowing time for worship gatherings. Christians are grateful wherever they live that such a day like our Sunday exists. Further, Sunday is replete with meaning (resurrection, Pentecost, eternal rest/sabbath). The day may come that civil laws and customs are changed. Then another

selection for a worship time, probably less desirable and possibly inconvenient, will have to be made.

ENDNOTES

¹R. J. Bauckham, "Sabbath and Sunday in the Post-Apostolic Church," in From Sabbath to Lord's Day, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 259.

²Willy Rordorf, Sunday, trans. A. A. K. Graham (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), 178.

³Kirsopp Lake, trans., "Didache," Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1965), 321.

⁴There is a redundancy and/or pleonism, as reflected in the translation. Is it the Lord's "Day"? The sense suggests so, but a word needs to be supplied. The same problem also occurs in the next citation (Ignatius). For more discussion on possibilities, see R. J. Bauckham, "The Lord's Day," in From Sabbath to Lord's Day, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 227-28.

⁵Lake, 331.

⁶Ibid., "Ignatius to the Magnesians," 205.

⁷Even if κυριακήν here means Easter (annual) instead of the Lord's Day (weekly), the contrast is still between Christianity and Judaism.

⁸Berthold Altaner, Patrology, trans. Hilda Graef (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), 81, shows that dating this Epistle is difficult. His suggestion is A.D. 115-140.

⁹Lake, "The Epistle of Barnabas," 395.

¹⁰Ibid., 395-97.

¹¹F. F. Bruce, New Testament History (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 423-25, carries the translation of this correspondence.

¹²Ibid., 426, explains seditious activities.

¹³Most interpreters take this to mean Sunday. However, Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), 98, points out that it may only mean a certain weekday, or any prearranged time.

¹⁴Rordorf, 173.

¹⁵Theodore Tappert, Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, and Arthur C. Piepkorn, eds., The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 87; and, Hans Lietzmann, Heinrich Bornkamm, Hans Volz, and Ernst Wolf, eds., Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 582.

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