

Sun-Day law: the persistent mistake of western christianity, and how to fix it

Why is Sunday assumed to be the proper day of worship in western christianity?

Why is this important? Does anyone care?

On March 7, 321 CE Roman emperor Constantine issued a civil decree making Sun-day a day of rest from labor; all judges, city people and craftsmen shall rest upon the venerable day of the sun.

For 1,800 years western christianity has fallen into lockstep with Constantine's errant theology.

Technically speaking, we didn't need sun and moon for light. Light and darkness had already been created on Day One. Sun and moon were created on the 4th day, that's why the sun isn't in the precise center of earth's orbit. Regardless, the sun was created for visibility, photosynthesis, solar heat, and for us to mark days, Shabbats and years. The moon was created to mark months and seasons.

G-d placed the sun and moon in the sky to stand as witnesses of His eternal promises to Israel, as we read in Jeremiah 31:34-35 and 33:17-22.

Shabbat rest

The seventh day is the Lord's Shabbat. This day is set apart as holy; it is not like any other day. It is the day that the Lord rests. We cannot substitute another day, since we didn't create the day. The Abushta Creator instituted Shabbat at the end of creation by resting, and intends for us to observe it, by resting. [Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5, Hebrews 4]

This 7-day cycle has been established for humanity and is in effect. Although the whole world uses this pattern, only some people honor the Creator by observing and keeping Shabbat.

The 7-day week was created by the Creator. We honor Him by using the week in accordance with His directions. This cycle of Shabbat rest was further set in order for the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, as Moshe received the Ten Devarim [Ten Words/Ten Commands] and is still in effect.

In micro-summation of history, on March 7, 321 Emperor Constantine established the Sunday Law, thereby usurping the divine order of rest on Shabbat. The obedient Jews of his empire had observed and kept Shabbat for millennia according to Torah, because they are a people set apart by G-d. This created a problem for Constantine – he needed to form his empire into unified groupthink and behavior.

Although this was a peacetime strategy, it was more of an empire-wide coercion. Constantine used a combination of governmental and religious leverage to accomplish this massive political-religious shift.

Sun-day law

“On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrate and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however, persons engaged in agricultural work may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain growing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.” [English paraphrase]



bust of Constantine

Strategy for change

Constantine's best fit for a 'universal' religion was christianity. He needed a benchmark.

And so, he picked the 'Day of the Sun'. 'Dies Solis Invicti' [Latin: day of Sol Invictus; Roman god of the sun] translated roughly into German for 'Sun's Day', then into old English 'Sunnandaeg'. Germanic/Norse mythology personifies the sun goddess as Sunna of Sol. Constantine used the Julian [Roman] solar calendar instead of the Hebrew lunar calendar.

Constantine became Emperor of the Roman empire when his father, Constantius I, died in 306. At some point, Constantine adopted the practice of Christianity observed by his mother Helena, although history is unclear about who was the religious influencer.

Prior to the Constantine's conversion around 312, Christians had been persecuted by the Roman government. After his conversion, Christianity gained acceptance, later becoming the official religion; the Roman Catholic Church. This religious standardization is called 'orthodoxy' - also known as ecumenical unity. This is man's law: the antithesis of G-d's law.

What was conspicuous by its absence during these decades of change? G-d's eternal law. The Jewish inhabitants of the empire faithfully held to Torah, but were becoming increasingly marginalized.

Constantine, of course, was not acting alone in this march of history-making. In the early 2nd century CE, Bishop Ignatius of Antioch [a.k.a Theophorus/Ignatius Nurono], was en route to his execution in Rome. While docked at a seaport in Smyrna, he wrote letters to his disciples and assemblies. Here are some excerpts;

'if we still live according to Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace.'
 'a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in observance of the Lord's Day'
 'if anyone preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him.'

The ideology of Replacement Theology was already underway.

Roman Catholic Church + Roman Empire

To develop and secure its power base in a manner common throughout history, the RCC formed an alliance with the Roman government. As expected, both parties derived mutual authority and power from this coalition. The RCC was able to engineer its doctrines to create a mutually-beneficial relationship with the Roman government. Opposition to either the church or the state carried severe punishment; excommunication, death, loss of property, etc.

In 325, after defeating his rival Licinius [Emperor of Eastern Roman Empire], Constantine consolidated his rule of the whole empire and established Constantinople [previously Byzantium] as its capital.

Also in 325, Constantine convened the Council of Nicea which was an important gathering that produced the Nicene Creed. In the years from 331-336, he had gold, silver and bronze statues taken from pagan temples. This was ostensibly an economic measure, so that coins could be minted and pagan influence diminished. This currency identified the importance of the Emperor and his sun-god, in daily transactions within the Roman empire.

These new coins bore the image of the Emperor Constantine [front] and the Sun-god [back].



Constantine – era coins showing the Emperor and the Sun-god

~ **Soli Invicto Comiti** ~

[Latin: to the unconquered sun]

Constantinian Shift

The 'Constantinian Shift' is a term used by historians and theologians to describe the outcome of Constantine's initiatives. Ironically, although the Roman empire fell, Constantine's strategies did cause a huge theological shift. The emperor's devious plans for sun-day have picked up momentum for 18 centuries and are operating today – check your calendar.

This may seem like a beneficial amalgamation of culture, but the net result is that for 1,800 years, the Roman Catholic church retains a global network of influence on western christianity: sun-day has replaced the Lord's Shabbat.

Some folks claim that 'every day is holy'. If every day is holy, then no day is holy. Men cannot sanctify a day as holy – that is an honor due only to the Creator of days. He sanctified His Shabbat as holy, as a day of rest.

Millions of Christians, by practice, supersede G-d's day of rest by ignoring or replacing it. They follow Constantine, probably by ignorance, but by their own repeated acts of commission. The fall-back reasoning for this doctrine is that our Savior was resurrected on Sunday, so that is the church-approved day of worship. [Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, 9, Luke 24:1]

Sunday is the day they unlock the doors of the church house, the day they collect the tithes; neither of which is found or commanded in scripture.

- John 20:19 relates a gathering on the first day of the week when Yeshua showed up.
- Acts 20:7 relates a meeting on the first day of the week, where Rabbi Paul lectured.
- I Corinthians 16:2 instructs the Galatian assemblies to collect alms on the first day of the week.

These are all scripturally accurate records of unrelated events, yet they cannot be construed as either recognizing nor establishing the first day of the week, as something to replace Shabbat.

Incidentally, every day can be, and should be, a day of worship. We should live righteous lives before our Savior every day.

scriptural truth

The truth is that G-d's law is righteous and it is eternal. G-d revealed it to us through Moshe at Mount Sinai and the succeeding 40 years, as Moshe wrote as he was directed. G-d's law supersedes all other nations, laws and history and time.

G-d's laws are the foundation of the universe, the earth and its mortal inhabitants. When Yeshua comes to earth, He will stand on the Mount of Olives, then He will teach His law from Yerushalayim.

This law, given as a gift to mankind, is our connection to our Father. Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 teach us about the Ten Words; the very character of Yahweh our Father. These are the laws by which we live righteously before our Creator, and in harmony with our community.

The Moedim [Appointed Times] we study in Leviticus 23 teach us about the yearly festivals which are based on the lunar cycles. Hebrews 4 elaborates on the aspect of Shabbat rest.

Shabbat rest is the 'Lord's Shabbat' – it has been created for mankind to rest as He does. It is our time to refresh and re-create as we spend time with Him.

I'm a latecomer to the Lord's Shabbat. For me, obedience started about 4 years ago and although I'm not much smarter, I'm closer to the Father - it seems that G-d has blessed me by drawing me into his embrace. I will never look back.

At some point, we must diligently study G-d's word for ourselves without filters, without outsourcing our theology, without articulate opinions. We must read, understand and observe truth straight-up. This is not easy to cut through the mix, but it is simplicity of belief and simplicity of action.

It is understanding and obeying – moving beyond faith to faithfulness.

Are we prepared to rest?