

[Note by James W. Bruggeman: Over the years we have had the privilege of having fellowship with Christians of numerous denominations and those of no denomination. Some have been very adamant about which day is the true sabbath. I have accumulated reams of articles and numerous volumes setting forth the various viewpoints on which day is the sabbath. The volume of material in my files is so extensive that I could make a persuasive case that the sabbath is (a) on Saturday (b) on Sunday (c) from noon Saturday to noon Sunday (d) from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday (e) that the day rotates from year to year, etc.

Given that, I will not debate the issue, but simply encourage all Christian believers to be persuaded in your own conscience by your study of the Word. That done, then keep the sabbath. Take one day in seven as a rest from your normal labors. From all the reams of essays and books we have on this issue, we have found the following brief treatise to be most enlightening and we offer it for your perusal.

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The Sabbath Issue

BY HOWARD B. RAND

AGAIN AND AGAIN we have stressed the necessity to obey the commandment, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20: 8). The vital importance of this law to God's people is stressed further:

"Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." (Ex. 31: 13.)

We receive many questions from those who observe Saturday as their Sabbath, challenging the validity of our position unless we too observe Saturday, instead of Sunday, as our Sabbath Day. Due to the volume of letters received on this subject, we are taking this opportunity to present certain facts for consideration. The contention is that the seventh day, *i.e.*, Saturday, is the correct Sabbath in a sequence of unbroken weeks from the time of Adam and that, in order to obey the Law of Sabbaths, the seventh day, which is Saturday, must be observed as the Day of Rest.

If it were possible to pinpoint the place on earth where the order of the weeks was first instituted by man, and remain at that location, barring any other complications, the sequence of the weeks, with its seventh-day Sabbath, could be observed. Because, however, the moment one moves west or east of a given locality, he will increasingly move out of step with the orderly observance of the original one day in seven, it has become necessary to keep the spirit of the law since it is now absolutely impossible for all Christians in all localities to keep the letter of the law; that is, observe the very same seventh day regardless of where one lives on the face of this globe. Nevertheless, every Christian, regardless of where he lives, can observe the law that states we shall labor six days and rest on the seventh.

Until the following problems are satisfactorily resolved, we contend that all who observe one day in seven as holy unto the Lord, in step with local requirements, are keeping the spirit of the law and are blameless in the sight of God. This applies whether the local requirements set aside the seventh day or the first day of the week and regardless of the name by which that day may be called. This assertion is made in the light of the following facts.

Let one man go east and another west, each keeping one day in seven as their Sabbath as they travel according to their custom at the point of departure. When they meet on the other side of the globe, they will be forty-eight hours apart as to time. Each would have faithfully kept, in orderly sequence, one day in seven as his Sabbath, but which one would be observing the correct day? How could they adjust their differences so that they would both be in step with the original sequence -of days? They could not.

Our Seventh Day Adventist friends will say that the calendar would make the correction. The calendar, however, is a humanly-devised method to camouflage the fact that those who journey east and west are definitely out of step with the sequence of days at the point of beginning. Furthermore, in the early ages there was no such thing as a world calendar by which such corrections could be made.

Let us offer another supposition. Because of the loss and gain in time in the movement east and west, it has been found necessary to establish a time line from north to south through the Pacific Ocean in order to compensate for the loss and gain in time. This is called the International Date Line. On one side of this date line it would be Sunday. On the other side of the date line it would be Saturday, but the sun would be shining overhead and it would be identically the same day.

The Christian, living on the Sunday side of the time line,

would be calling the day Sunday. The Seventh Day Adventist, living on the Saturday side of the time line, would be calling the day Saturday. Yet both would be observing the same day as their Sabbath.

It would be ludicrous for the Seventh Day Adventist on his side of the time line to single out the Christian on the other side of the time line and chide him for failing to keep the proper day as his Sabbath. The Christian could retort: "But I am observing the very same day you are keeping." The Seventh Day Adventist would remonstrate: "But you are calling it Sunday, not Saturday." The Christian could respond: "What difference does it make insofar as the name is concerned so long as it is the same day you are observing as your Sabbath. I am in step with what you say is the correct day regardless of the name by which it may be called." If the Seventh Day Adventist were correct in his claim that the day he observes is indeed the seventh day in the sequence of days from the beginning, surely the Christian who keeps the same day could not be construed to be out of step with the day the Seventh Day Adventist deems the proper one to observe.

This, in itself, completely nullifies the Seventh Day Adventists' claim that the letter of the law, in the keeping of the day, is more important than complying with the spirit of the law; that is, laboring six days and observing the seventh as the Sabbath. When the Seventh Day Adventists undertake to justify their opposition to observing the first day of the week as our Sabbath, contending that Rome was responsible for its selection, we are reminded of Justin the Martyr's statement in *Apology For the Christians*, written in 140 A.D.:

"On Sunday we held our joint meetings, for the first day is that on which, having removed darkness and made the world, Jesus Christ rose from the dead." (See *Apology For the Christians*, Volume II, page 98.)

Justin speaks of it as an established custom; therefore, it must have been so kept for at least fifty years before 140 A.D. Consequently, this would be in the lifetime of the Apostle John and would explain the reference where John stated: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10).

Let those who censor us for observing the first day of the week as our Sabbath first reconcile the factual illustrations given with their contention that Saturday only is the day to be observed. We will agree with them to this extent. If we were living in a community where Saturday was locally honored as the Sabbath, we would conform with the local requirements in order to keep in step with the general observance of the day. On the other hand, if we lived, as we

do, in a locality where Sunday is observed as the Sabbath, that is the day we should also observe in order to present a united front in setting aside one day in seven as holy unto the Lord. In that way we would be lending our influence to the keeping of the Sabbath law and would avoid contributing to the violation of that law on the part of others by being out of step with the custom of the Christian majority in a given locality. Our personal testimony is that the Lord has blessed us in the observance of the spirit of the law.