

How Sabbath-Keeping Became Sunday-Keeping

The case for keeping Sunday, instead of Saturday, as “the Lord’s day” has five arguments:

1. Since Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week, it is appropriate for Christians to worship on Sunday rather than Saturday.
2. In Acts 20:7, Luke wrote that it was, *On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread.* So, the church in Troas assembled on Sunday.
3. In 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul wrote, *On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.* This was a giving activity on Sunday.
4. In Revelation 1:10, The Apostle John introduces his revelation saying, *I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.* Since he did not say the Sabbath day, it is assumed this was Sunday.
5. The Sabbath day command is seen as referring to a weekly cyclical day of rest rather than a specific day of the week.

R.C. Sproul wrote, “John Calvin argued that it would be legitimate to have the Sabbath day on any day if all of the churches would agree, because the principle in view was the regular assembling of the saints for corporate worship and for the observation of rest [ibid].”

The Case for Sunday-Keeping Is Unconvincing

1. It is good to honor the fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, but there is no command from Christ or the apostles that would indicate the church was instructed to remember that by having a meeting (or resting) on Sunday.
2. The meeting of the church in Troas (described in Acts 20:6-12) included *the first day of the week.* But this is just an example of what one church did one time, possibly because Paul was *intending to leave the next day.* There is no command or implication that all churches did that or were supposed to do that. The church in Jerusalem met every day of the week (Acts 2:46). Is that example a command for everybody? Jesus and Paul were single and celibate. Does that mean we should all be single and celibate? Examples are not commands.
3. First Corinthians 16 is Paul’s request for *each one of you* believers to *put aside and save* some money *on the first day of every week.* Paul was making a collection from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia to help the poor believers in Jerusalem. He was asking them to take some of their salary and set it aside weekly *so that no collections be made when I come.* There is no reference here to a meeting of a church.
4. There is no evidence that *the Lord’s day* in Revelation 1:10 is Sunday. E. W. Bullingers’ “Commentary on Revelation,” explains: In the New Testament this day is *always* called “the first day of the week.” (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2 2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2) There is no evidence of any kind that “the first day of the week” was ever called “the Lord’s Day” before the Apocalypse was written. You have to bring Sunday to the verse to get Sunday out of it. John could just as well be referring to a Saturday Sabbath. Isaiah called *the Sabbath day a delight, the holy day of the Lord.* Also, if we look at it in the context of the prophecy of the book of Revelation, it could be referring to the Old Testament prophetic *day of the Lord* (Isaiah 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15; 2:1; Amos 5:18) That is the time beginning with the future tribulation (Revelation 6ff). At any rate, nothing says *the day of the Lord* is Sunday.
5. One can say that keeping a weekly day of rest, instead of a specified day of rest, is a cyclical application of the Genesis creation rest and the Sabbath command for Israel. But that is an **application**, not an interpretation, of those passages. It is unrealistic to suppose God was telling Israel to just pick any day of the week to rest.