



bath tell us, for it only forbade mechanical work and forensic work. He did not forbid the cultivation of the fields.

The Fathers of the Church warn us about those who want to keep the Sabbath like the Jews:

*"Do not be deceived by strange doctrines or by those old fables that are no longer useful. For if even now we live according to Judaism, we thereby confess that we have not yet received grace... Now those who had been brought up in the old order of things came to a new hope, and they no longer lived by keeping the Sabbath, but by Sunday, the*

*day on which our life dawned by the grace of the Lord and of his death. But some deny this mystery, by which we receive faith and endure suffering, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ, our only teacher"* (St. Ignatius, Letter to the Magnesians, 8-10).

For the holy martyr, **being found disciples of Jesus Christ excludes the sabbatizing**, the keeping of the Sabbath with all its consequences. **For he who keeps the Sabbath has not received grace.**

From the beginning, Christians have kept Sunday, the first day of the week:

*"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together for the breaking of bread..."* (Acts 20:7).

To those who criticize us for sticking to apostolic teachings, we remind them of the words of the Apostle Paul:

*"Therefore let no one criticize you for matters of food or drink, or on the subject of feasts, new moons, or Sabbaths. **All this is a shadow of what is to come;** but the reality is the body of Christ"* (Colossians 2:16).

And that is the reality in which we Orthodox Christians live.

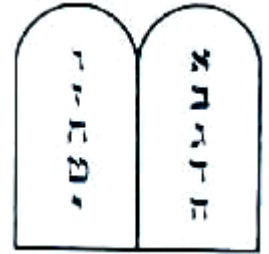


## APOLOGETICAL CATECHESIS

### IS SATURDAY AND NOT SUNDAY THE LORD'S DAY?

Certain non-Orthodox groups hold that the correct day to worship God is Saturday and not Sunday.

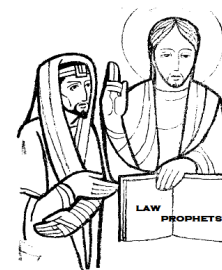
They cite the text of Exodus 20:8-10 to corroborate their teachings: *"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall work and do all your work, but the seventh day is a day of rest for the Lord your God. Thou shalt not do any work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that dwelleth in thy city."*



**These groups are under the illusion that Christ didn't change anything.**

Our Lord came to make all things new, and **everyone who comes to Christ leaves behind the old ways of Judaism and paganism**. When the Pharisees criticized Jesus for not behaving according to the Old Testament laws, He replied, *"No one throws a patch of cloth untilld into an old garment, for the addition pulls on the garment, and a worse tear occurs"* (Matthew 9:16).

They will tell us that Christ did not come to change the Law, but at every step we see Christ change the old law into a new one:



*"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so do you also love one another"* (John 13:34). Before Jesus died on the cross, the laws of the Old Covenant were in force: *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfil"* (Matthew 5:17).

Because Christ came to fulfil all that was written and that is *"a shadow of things to come"* (Colossians 2:17).

### ORTHODOX ANSWERS 10





The Holy Scriptures tell us that God established a covenant with His people Israel, and gave them the Law with its Ten Commandments that include the Sabbath. The Apostle Paul tells us of the Law and its commands that *"whoever practices its precepts shall live by them"* (Galatians 3:12). That is the essence of the Old Testament Covenant.



But, Christians are no longer under the old covenant of the Law: *"... before faith came, we were shut up under the watch of the law, waiting for the faith that was to be manifested"* (Galatians 3:23).

**The essence of the New Covenant is faith.** The Law served God's people as educators or caretakers until the coming of Jesus Christ. *"But when faith has come, we are no longer under the guidance of the teacher"* (Galatians 3:25).

In the New Covenant we are led by the Holy Spirit: *"If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law"* (Galatians 5:18).

**The Church, the Body of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit teaches us that the Saturday is no longer the Sabbath,** and it does so because if the Sabbath was kept as a commemoration of the rest of creation, **we now have a better reason to celebrate: Christ has risen from the dead.**

And the Resurrection inaugurated a new Day: The Day of Eternal Rest: *"Therefore it is clear that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever enters into his rest also rests from his labours, just as God rests from his"* (Hebrews 4:9-10).



**Christ is our rest.** And the Church commemorates the entry into this rest on the first day of the week: The Day of the Resurrection of our Lord.

Let us listen to the Tradition of the Church:

*"Your Sabbaths are not acceptable to me now, but the Sabbath which I have made, the Sabbath on which, having made all things rest, I will make the beginning of an eighth day, that is, the beginning of another world. That is why we also celebrate the eighth day with rejoicing, because it is the day on which Jesus Christ rose from the*



*dead and, after being revealed, ascended into heaven* (Epistle of Barnabas 15:8-9)."

St. Justin, the Martyr, tells us about Sunday: *"And we hold this general meeting on the day of the sun, because it is the first day on which God, transforming darkness and matter, made the world, and also the day on which Jesus Christ, our Saviour, rose from the dead"* (I, 67).

Does the Church have the power to change Saturday to Sunday?

Those who teach that we should keep the Sabbath of the Old Testament have discarded the Apostolic Tradition of the Church. They believe that any person "inspired by God" on the basis of an individual reading of the Bible can establish the "true" Church of Christ. These people believe that the Church was lost at some point in history, and that their duty is to "restore true Christianity." And in their illusion, they forget the most important thing: **The Church is the Body of Christ, with Christ as Head, and the Holy Spirit dwells in it.**



*"Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 18:18).

**That is the power of the Church as the Body of the Lord.**

And when we speak of the Church, we always refer to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church: The Orthodox Church. And the Church is not a multitude of groups, assemblies and associations that cannot agree on anything.



The Church has not been lost, because it cannot be lost: **The Body of Christ CANNOT be lost.** There is NOTHING to rescue or recover, because the Church has always been there, and will be until the coming of Christ because *"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"* (Matthew 16:18).

When Emperor Constantine granted peace to the Church, he made law what was already a custom for Christians. It was not the other way around, as the defenders of the Jewish Sab-

