

THE LORD'S DAY: THE SABBATH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS

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Abstract

The study used explanatory research design, the research strategy adopted was cross sectional survey, the research approach used was qualitative research approach, the sampling design were research into papers published by journals and papers published at various websites, the population of the study was 7 authors, the source of collecting data for the study was primary source, the method of data collection was research. The problem statement was "The Lord's Day- The Sabbath of the New Testament Saints, background of the study was brief introduction of the Christians' Sabbath. Through explanatory research design, the objectives of the study were achieved. The study was found out the origin of Sunday worship, the history about the Lord's Day, significance of observing the "Lord's Day", why Christians observed the Lord's Day as Sabbath; Biblical comments on Sun god worship. The study identified that the first century Christians observed the Lord's Day as Sabbath day which had no connection with the Sun god. The study recommended that ministers of God should educate their congregation to understand that

Old Testament dispensation was past and the era of dispensation of grace was reigning, Christian organizations must teach the public to know the origin of the Jewish Sabbath and the particular day Jesus rose from the dead

Background of the study

Introduction

The early Jewish Christians observed the Sabbath day through prayer and rest. They met on Sunday which was the first day of the week according to the Jewish tradition. In the second century Ignatius of Antioch never encouraged Sabbath observation. Later many Christians observed Sunday as a Sabbath day instead of observing the Jewish Sabbath.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the origin of Sunday worship
- To find out the history concerning the Lord's Day
- To find out the reasons why Christians observe the Lord's day as Sabbath

- To find out Biblical comments on Sun god worship

The origin of Sunday worship

Almost all the churches in the world observed the Sabbath and according to Acts 16:13, Matthew 28:1, Luke 23:56 genuine Christians and the disciples of Jesus observed the Sabbath as specified in the Hebrew Bible. Christians in Alexandria and Rome worshipped on Sunday due to ancient tradition. When Jerusalem was demolished, Antioch in Syria became the capital of Christianity. Satan created a system in Alexandria and Rome but Alexandria became the center for worldly "learned men" and was the place where the Jews followed pagan philosophy. The world centre for paganism was Rome which influenced Christians in Rome. Alexandria and Rome made alliance and the day of the Sun god replaced the Sabbath day. Satan stirred up the spirits of the inspired leaders, learned in Rome and Alexandria to respect the ancient tradition more than the scriptures. In the second century the Roman emperors and the Alexandria Theologians developed strong desire to worship the Sun god. All religions were blend into one but the Sun god became the main object of worship and pagan philosophy influenced the church fathers. The bishops in Rome deceived the pagan emperors and the methods of Alexandria evangelism deviated

from the steps of God. A weekly holiday was observed for the worship of the Sun god instead of Sabbath. In 190 A.D Victor I who was the bishop of Rome united with Clement the teacher of Origen to assist to make Sunday the prominent day of worship in the churches. In the second century many of the bishops decreed that the resurrection should be celebrated on Sunday. Before Clement, there was no record that "Sunday" was called the Lord day. Through the support of the pagans and the professed Christians, Sunday was proclaimed to all the nations and the Mediterranean as worship day.

Thesis statement: The problem statement of the study was "The Lord's day: The Sabbath of the New Testament Saints. The study found out the origin of Sunday worship, the history of the Christian Sabbath, argument for Christians' Sabbath, significance of observing christians' sabbath; Biblical comments on Sun god worship.

The history of the Lord's day

The term "the Lord's Day" in Christianity is referring to "Sunday" the day of corporate worship. A lot of Christians observe Sunday in memory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the gospel testify that He raise from the dead on the first of the week. According to sources Christians observed corporate worship on Sunday in the 1st century. In Acts 20:7 says that

Christians meet on Sunday for the purpose of "breaking of bread" and "preaching". Around second century writers like Justin Martyr testified about Sunday worship and in 361A.D Sunday became compulsory as weekly day of worship. Besides, Reformed churches, Methodist Churches and Baptist churches accepted Sunday as Christian Sabbath which is known as sabbatarianism. The first-Day sabbatarians went to church on Sunday morning and Sunday evening.

Argument for Christians' Sabbath

The early church: The leaders and members of the early church met together to worship God on the first day of the week which fell on Sunday. Jesus Christ rose from the dead on Sunday (Matthew 28:1; Acts 28:7).

The intention: The main reason why the early Church changed the Sabbath day to Sunday was to remember the day Jesus rose from the dead which sealed and established the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:6).

Redemption: The disciples of Christ perceived that they were no longer under the law so it was not important to them to observe the Sabbath day (Romans 6:14).

The law: The observation of the Sabbath was part of the law but the leaders and the members

of the early Church realized that they were under the grace of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:15-17; Galatians 3:24).

Jesus' declaration: Jesus Christ confessed that He was Lord over the Sabbath and did not live by the Sabbath laws (Luke 6:5).

New creation: When Jesus Christ resurrected, the Old Covenant and the Sabbath observation were abolished. Christians are not old creatures but new creatures in Christ and they regard the New Covenant.

The fact: The Bible confirms that the New Testament worshipped on Sunday but that particular day had no connection with the Sun god worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10).

The perception of the New Testament: The early church regarded Sunday as a day full of symbolism with respect to the physical rest similar to Mosaic law. The resurrection and the new creation creates typological image.

The gospel account: The writers of gospel testify that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of week (Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

Pauline exhortation: The church at Corinth was advised by Apostle Paul to save money

towards the first day of the week as Galatians church had been doing.

The epistle of Barnabas: The letter of Barnabas regarded Sunday as a special day of celebration.

Literature review: A religious body has been speaking against those who worship God on Sunday that it is not Biblical to worship Him on Sunday. Sunday worshippers claim that Sunday is the appropriate day to worship God but the study is limited to the reasons why Sunday worshippers worship on Sunday. Therefore the study found out what other authors had written in favor of Sunday worship. In June 1, 2012 John Reveal wrote an article entitled "The Lord's Day - Rest, reflection and recognition of our Lord". In his article he stated that the Lord's Day was the first day of the week but it was a weekly observance for Christians. Christians observed the Lord's Day to remember the day Jesus Christ rose from the dead which was marked by worship and spiritual devotion in public and private. Christians motive of observing the Lord's Day was to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The observation of the Lord's Day was centered on creation where it was meaningful for man to rest, reflect and recognize the resurrection day of Jesus Christ. In reference to (Gotquestions,2021) the Lord's Day is referring to Sunday but the term "Lord's

Day" is mentioned once in Revelation 1:10 and apostle John did not explain the term "Lord's Day". Because of that we could accept that he was referring to the first century Christians. Some agree that the "Lord's Day" is the Christians' Sabbath like the Jewish Sabbath. Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday and His resurrection made Christianity unique among the religions in the world (John 20:1). Since He rose from the dead, Christians had been meeting on the first day of the week. Their main purpose of meeting on Sunday was to celebrate Jesus' victory over sin and death (Acts 20:7; 1Corinthians 16:2). God rested on the Sabbath day and made it Holy but Jesus declared that He was Lord over the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8). With regards to what the authors had written, the study investigated into the origin of Sunday worship, the history of Christians' Sabbath, argument for Christians'sabbath, Biblical reasons for observing christians'sabbath and Biblical comments on Sun god worship.

Significance of observing the Lord's Day

- A lot of Christians worship God on Sunday to commemorate Christ's victory over Satan and to involve ourselves in the day of recreation (Revelation 21:4-5).
- The Lord's Day is a divine gift that shapes our lives and gives us physical and spiritual rest.

- We sanctify God on Sunday in sense that we don't belong to this evil world but we are the royals of the future Heavenly city.
- We worship on Sunday to remember the day man got total deliverance from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:22).
- It was the day Christ presented His followers to His Father.
- It was the day God sent the Holy Spirit through in the name of Christ.
- The resurrection of Christ was the proof of the final resurrection of man.

Biblical comments on Sun worship

The nations surrounding the Israelites were worshipping the Sun god. In Egypt the name of the Sun god was Amun-Ra, in Mesopotamia the Sun god was Shamash, and in Canaan the Sun god's name was Shemesh. The name of the Canaanites city defeated by Israelites was Beth-Shemesh meaning "the house of the sun" which might be the center of the sun worship (Joshua 19:22). The Babylonians and the Assyrians worshipped the sun. The book of Genesis helps to know that the sun was one of the creatures of God made to serve mankind (Genesis 1:14-19). The sun, the moon or star should not be regarded as deities (Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:2-5). Notwithstanding divine warning with respect to sun worship, the Israelites worshipped the sun god. Josiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah spoke against the sun worship (2Kings 23:11;8:16). Prophet

Jeremiah predicted about the judgement upon idolaters (Jeremiah 8:1-2). God expects man to worship Him alone and not to worship His creatures but the wrath of God will come upon those who have deviated from the standard of the Bible (Romans 1:18-21).

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter deals with research design, research strategy, research approach, sampling design, population of the study, the source of collecting data and the method of data collection. The research design adopted for the study was explanatory research design. Through explanatory research design, the study explained how the objectives of the study was achieved. The research strategy used was cross sectional survey where published papers about the subject under study were considered as study, the research approach used was qualitative research approach. Because the study found out whether Sunday was observed as a Sabbath day by the first century Christians. Concerning the sampling design published journal papers and papers published at various websites were surveyed. The population of the study was 7 authors and the source of data collection was primary source. The method of data collection was research into published papers.

Sampling design

Papers published by both journal and at various websites were studied.

Population of the study

The population of the study was 7 authors.

The source and the method of data collection

The source of collecting data was primary source and the method of data collection was research into published papers.

Summary of findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of findings

The study discovered the origin of Sunday worship, the history of the Lord's Day, Biblical reasons for the observation of the Lord's Day and Biblical comments on Sun god

Conclusion

The study found out that the first century Christians met on the first day of week which fell on Sunday to worship God and their meeting on that particular day had no connection with the Sun god. They met on Sunday because Jesus Christ rose from the dead on Sunday. Due to the above mentioned points, the study generalized that the "Lord's Day" was the Sabbath of the New Testament Saints.

Recommendation

Preaching and teaching

Ministers of God should teach and preach their congregation to understand that we are in the New Testament dispensation and not under Old Testament dispensation. Through this, they will know that the Sabbath observation was restricted to the Jews.

Public education

Christian organizations should teach the public to understand the origin of the Jewish Sabbath and the why reasons why they observed the Sabbath day. This education could be done through social media.

Acknowledgement

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The history

Ministers of God should let their congregation know the particular day Jesus resurrected from the dead and the day His disciples met to worship God. As ministers of God, they ought to educate them understand that God wants every man to follow the footsteps of Christ.

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