

# **Sabbath Day Or Sun-Day?**

by

Anthony V. Gaudiano

Mankind continuously receives blessings from the Father and the Son. Breathing is but one example. Yet, such blessings are seldom acknowledged and rarely is thanks given for them.

Mankind can know the name of the Father from ancient Hebrew manuscripts and the name of the Son from ancient Greek manuscripts. The name of the Father, transliterated into English is *Yahweh*. The name of His only begotten Son, transliterated into English, is *Yeshua*. Believers are often blessed with insight when they encounter these names while studying scripture.

Who can grasp the boundless love of Yeshua Anointed? He created all things in this world in obedience to the will of his Father. Yeshua loves mankind so much that he willingly relinquished his divinity, became mortal, and shed his precious blood as the ultimate sacrifice to his Father to atone for mankind's sins.

Believers strive to be obedient to the scriptures. This includes keeping the *commanded* seventh day Sabbath. There is *NO command* to keep Sunday! Sunday-keeping is scriptural disobedience.

## **Seventh Day Or First Day**

Some time ago an advertisement was placed in the local newspaper by the largest Sunday-keeping church in a town. The ad invited people to a media sermon titled: *Sabbath or Sunday*.

The church records their Sunday Service for shut-ins. However, when the service began, something happened and the broadcast did not occur. A CD and transcript of the sermon was available afterward.

In the Introduction on the CD the Senior Pastor mentioned that he recently had a conversation with a person who exclaimed: "It is a sin to worship on Sunday!" In response, the pastor gave a sermon on the matter saying that "breaking the Sabbath came up from time to time."

As the CD progressed some of the minister's comments seemed tinged with annoyance. Near the end of the CD the minister quickly related his biblical support of Sunday worship. Included were a few bible verses commonly parroted by those who attempt to defend Sunday worship. They are easily refuted whereas scripture verses about keeping the seventh day Sabbath are numerous.

## **Sabbath-Keeper's Letter**

Afterwards a Sabbath-keeper wrote the pastor a letter saying he regretted that a person had exclaimed to him "it is a sin to worship on *Sunday* because, of course, one can worship on any day of the week."

The writer also stated that the exclamation was incorrect, that the person should have said “It is a sin to *not* worship on the Sabbath day.” That statement was also incorrect. Why?

Sin is defined in scripture at 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:4 as: “*the transgression of the Law.*” The Law is the Ten commandments which are found in Exodus 20:1. The Fourth Commandment there says to “keep the Sabbath day holy.” This is defined broadly as: to rest, to cease from one’s labors.

The Fourth Commandment does *not* require one to worship on the Sabbath day, only to cease from work. Within Roman Catholicism not attending church on Sunday is taught to be a ‘Mortal’ sin which must be confessed to avoid damnation.

The reasons proffered herein from the CD sermon in support of Sunday-keeping are few. They are easily refuted whereas scripture verses about keeping the seventh day Sabbath are numerous.

## **The Seventh Day**

Verses cited herein are from *The Sacred Scriptures* bible, Bethel Edition, 1993, Bethel PA, a restored name version.

The Old Testament book of Genesis 2:1-3 mentions the creation week:

“And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day Elohim finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from his work which Elohim had created and made.”

The Hebrew word ‘Elohim’ is grammatically plural. Assume for the moment that ‘Elohim’ refers to the Father and the Son. A strict reading of the verses infer the creator of the universe, (the “heavens”) is Yahweh, and the creator of (the “earth”) is Yeshua (John 1:3). They blessed the seventh day Sabbath and hallowed it, i.e., set it apart (Exodus 23:3) which made it special.

The New Testament records that the seventh-day Sabbath was kept by Yeshua, the Apostles and Paul, and that it was observed after the death of our Savior by the Apostolic Church Fathers: Poylcarp, Ireaneus and Clement, and by the ‘Eastern’ church at Jerusalem for several hundred years. But the ‘Western’ church at Rome did *not* continue to keep the Sabbath.

The official *change* in the day of rest and worship from the seventh day to the first day of the week, occurred because of an edict issued by the Roman Emperor Constantine at the Counsel of Nicaea in CE 321. The edict was issued at the behest of the then early Catholic Church. The history of the edict has noteworthy lessons for Yahwists and Sunday-keepers.

The change from worshipping on the seventh day Sabbath to Sunday is documented in detail in the book: *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1977, 373 pages, by Dr. Samuel Bacchiocchi, PhD. It will be excerpted extensively herein without notation.

Dr. Bacchiocchi was a Seventh Day Adventist and the only non-catholic to graduate from the Gregorian Pontifical University, in Rome, Italy. His 1977 Doctoral Thesis became his first book. Since then Dr. Bacchiocchi has written twenty books and spoken nationally and internationally.

One of Dr. Bacchiocchi other books, *The Sabbath Under Crossfire* was written specifically to address arguments against keeping the Sabbath.

## **Sunday-Keeping Not Mentioned In Scripture**

Sunday-keeping is *not* mentioned in the scriptures. Accordingly, one would logically think Sunday-keeping would be recognized as unscriptural by religious authorities and rejected. They, more than most, have studied the Fourth Commandment. Yet, the opposite has occurred.

The Ten Commandments, which were written in stone by the finger of Almighty Yahweh, are known all over the world. Everyone should be in awe of the wisdom contained in them. They are the basis of English Civil Law and general civil law all over the world.

The Fourth Commandment begins in Exodus 20:8

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 six days shall you labor, and do all your work; 10 but the Seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim; *in it* you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the stranger that is within your gates: 11 for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: Therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

The English word translated ‘Sabbath’ is number 7676 in James Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance - Hebrew Dictionary. It is pronounced *shab-bawth*.’ It and related words have similar definitions, i.e.,: *an intermission, cessation, rest, repose, desist from exertion, keep, etc.*

The verses show that the word translated ‘rest’ in the commandment is the same word in Genesis describing Almighty Yahweh’s rest on the seventh day of creation week. The seventh day Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

One can see that keeping the seventh day Sabbath ‘holy’ applied to those under the authority of the head of a household. It is analogous to an employer/employee relationship.

The Fourth Commandment is specific in that the seventh day is to be *hallowed*, i.e., respected, resting from one’s labors for the 24 hour ‘period’ The Sabbath is not just “any day of the week,” or “one day in seven.” These are glib excuses from Sunday-keeping religious authority figures.

The Sabbath day was made and hallowed by Almighty Yahweh with his Son Yeshua, especially for mankind. It is a *sign* and a reminder of the great love they have for us, their creation.

## **Delusion**

Most Sunday-keeping religious denominations claim that they “worship on the Christian Sabbath” or, on “the Lord’s Day,” knowing full well that *neither* phrase is scriptural. They are excuses for not worshiping on the seventh day Sabbath. The words seem somewhat anti-Semitic.

Sunday-keeping church leaders teach anti-Sabbath excuses to their members who believe and parrot those excuses. Members assume the excuses are biblical since they originate within their own denomination. Members rarely research the scriptures to validate the truth of the excuses.

When Sunday-keeping members are challenged by Sabbath-keepers to produce *explicit* scriptural verses in support of their excuses, they decline, as do most of their religious leaders.

Is it not astounding that at the highest level in some so-called ‘bible believing’ denominations, the leadership does *not* obey the Fourth Commandment of their creator? This is *clearly* a sin of disobedience! Same occurred during the first two centuries of the Common Era (C.E.) ‘church.’

Sunday-keeping denomination leaders, and their members, must *obey* scripture and be faithful to obtain the promised reward of eternal life. Eternal life is *not* promised to the disobedient!

There is no excuse for Sunday-keepers. Each one has access to at least one bible; usually several. They are readily available free, and in various languages.

## **Responsibility for Sunday-keeping**

Most Sunday-keepers are unaware that the early Roman Catholic Church was largely, but not totally, responsible for the change in the day of worship from the seventh day Sabbath to Sunday.

The Roman Catholic Church has publically proclaimed that they have “the power and authority” to change the day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday. Details of this posture is reproduced in the Seventh Day Adventist booklet titled: *Rome’s Challenge*. It is free on the Internet.

The so-called bible-believing Sunday-keeping denominations *know* it was the Roman Catholic Church that was largely responsible for changing the day of worship. Yet, there is reluctance by them to even consider returning back to Yahweh’s commanded seventh day Sabbath. How can such people expect blessings from the Almighty Yahweh when they refuse to obey Him?

A Sunday-keeping pastor who would return to the commanded seventh day Sabbath would risk loss of his job. Changing back to the Sabbath for corporate worship is not even a possibility in most pastor’s minds, *even though it is a Commandment directly from their creator*.

## **Pastoral Letters**

In *The Sabbath Under Crossfire*, Dr. Bacchiocchi mentions one reason for his writing the book was the May 31, 1998, Pastoral Letter, *Dies Domini*, from Pope John Paul II in the Vatican.

The Pastoral Letter contains the Pope's concern about falling attendance at Roman Catholic Churches on Sunday. It is still occurring worldwide, especially in Europe. His simplistic solution was to garner political support to have mandatory Sunday-keeping legislated into law.

In the second chapter of the Pastoral Letter titled *Dies Christi*, John Paul II states that the gospels of Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1 show the resurrection *took place* "on the first day after the Sabbath." But do they specifically state that?

Mark 16:2 "And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb near sunrise."

Mark 16:9 "Now when he had been raised, early on the first day of the week he appeared first to Miriam Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons."

Luke 24:1 "But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared."

John 20:1 "Now on the first day of the week comes Miriam Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, to the tomb, and sees the stone taken away from the tomb."

*None* of the verses specifically say that the resurrection took place on the first day of the week!

It is a common mistake to *assume* the resurrection occurred early Sunday morning. That error is perpetuated by people who do not understand that the days in Genesis *began* in darkness, nor how the first day of the luna-solar scriptural year is determined, nor how *days, months, and years* were reckoned.

The bible and the knowledge how to determine the first day of the lunar-solar scriptural year enable one to determine the date on which Passover occurred within the years 26 CE to 34 CE. This span of years is to be examined because the scriptures mention that Yeshua "was about thirty years old" when he started his seven year ministry. He was cut off in the *midst* of the years and the week of his ministry as foretold in Daniel 9.

Yeshua's death occurred on Passover, Wednesday, Nisan 14, CE 31 (Julian) which corresponds to April 25<sup>th</sup>. The time of death would have been about mid-afternoon. Yeshua was entombed *just before sunset* the *same* day (Luke 23:54).

Yeshua's prophecy about how long he would be entombed is in Matthew 12:40 which says:

"For as Jonah was three days *and* three nights in the belly of the great fish; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"

That is a specific period of *seventy-two hours*. Accordingly, Yeshua's prophecy about himself proves he arose just before the *sunset* of the *weekly* Sabbath. He was *already* risen on the first day of the week (Sunday) at the time described in Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1.

Further, it is commonly but erroneously taught that Yeshua's death occurred on the afternoon of 'Good Friday,' and his resurrection took place early 'Easter Sunday' morning. That time interval is *only about thirty six hours!* Yet this simple math discrepancy is rarely questioned.

When the math discrepancy is questioned, the parroted response of a Sunday-keeper is usually: "*they counted parts of days and nights*" as if the person were there. None of those responding can cite *scriptural* proof to support their mathematically incorrect statement.

The author's paper titled: *Rationale for the Date of Yeshua the Anointed's Death* shows how the United States Naval Observatory's website can be used to determine the specific Passover when Yeshua died. Passover, on 14 Nisan, was then called the 'Preparation' (day) i.e., for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread on 15 Nisan, an 'annual Sabbath.'

Luke 23:54 shows Yeshua was entombed as "the [annual] Sabbath drew on." This would have taken place just before the sunset of Passover day, Wednesday. Most people incorrectly assume the entombment occurred on Friday, and the Sabbath mentioned in the verse was the weekly Sabbath. This is easily proved wrong. It was an 'annual Sabbath,' i.e., the "*high day*" in John 19:31, the first of the seven days of Unleavened Bread, which can occur on *any* day of the week.

According to Yeshua's own prophecy about himself, he would have risen seventy-two hours after his entombment. That period would have ended *shortly before* the sunset of the *weekly* Sabbath.

Scripture shows Miriam of Magdala indeed came to the tomb early Sunday morning but Yeshua was not inside because he had *already* risen.

The bible verses prove that the Pope, and millions of others, are *wrong* when they assume the resurrection took place Sunday morning.

## Verses Cited For Keeping Sunday

Verses which are commonly cited as excuses for keeping Sunday instead of the seventh day Sabbath include:

Acts 20:7 - Paul and his followers had indeed gathered to 'break bread,' which is an idiom for eating a *common meal*. Paul was *not* preaching a Sunday worship service as is often claimed. Nothing in the verses indicate any of the bread eaten was 'communion' in the usual sense.

Corinthians 16:1 - This verse mentions a collection of goods which took place on the *first day of the week which then was a common work day*. The goods likely consisted of food stuffs, etc., to be shipped to the suffering believers in Israel since Paul was about to sail away.

Hardship could occur in Israel every seventh year during the 'land' Sabbath before the spring harvests occurred in the eighth year. It was *not* a Sunday service *nor* offering, in the usual sense.

Leviticus 16:16 - This verse requires Israelite males to give a tenth of their increase *three times* a year, at Jerusalem, during the Temples era, i.e., *not* every Sunday. The three times corresponded with the spring harvest of *barley* at Passover, the summer harvest of *wheat* at the Feast of Weeks, and autumnal harvest of *grapes*, etc., at the Feast of Tabernacles.

These few commonly cited verses fail to prove Sunday-keeping was universally practiced in New Testament times. Contrast those few verses with the *many* verses where observance of the seventh day Sabbath is mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. Yeshua obediently observed the Fourth Commandment of his Father Yahweh.

The scriptures record that during Paul's travels, the first place he went was to a Synagogue. This was because he knew from childhood that services would occur on the seventh day weekly Sabbath (not on the first day of the week). According to *Which day is the Sabbath of the New Testament?* by H. W. Armstrong, Ambassador College, Pasadena, CA, the scriptures record Paul kept *eighty-four* Sabbaths.

## Questions For Sunday-keepers

Here are basic questions which Sunday-keepers must answer *before* anyone should listen to them speak against keeping the seventh day Sabbath.

Their answers must be either yes (Y) or no (N) *only*, and they must cite specific scriptural support if the response is Yes. Anything less is unacceptable.

The questions are:

- (a) Do the scriptures record that the *giver* of the Ten Commandments *ever* amended or rescinded them (Y) (N)?
- (b) Do the scriptures record that the Ten Commandments are *not* now binding on Jews, Gentiles, and believers (Y) (N)?
- (c) Do the scriptures record that the *giver* of the Ten Commandments specifically required they be binding upon Jews, *only* (Y) (N)?
- (d) Our Savior said he came to: "fulfill the Law" (the Ten Commandments) and *added* two Commandments. Are any *not* binding on *all* believers (Y) (N)?
- (e) Do the scriptures record that man can pick whichever of the Commandments, *he* only will obey (Y) (N)?

## Rome's Challenge

In the aforementioned letter to the local Pastor, a booklet titled: *Rome's Challenge* was included.

The booklet reproduced four editorials which originally appeared in the *Catholic Mirror*, Baltimore, Maryland, September 2, 9, 16, and 23, 1893. The editorials were authored by *Cardinal Gibbons*, Baltimore, Maryland, or someone with his official sanction.

In summary, the editorials essentially state that:

Worship on Sunday is *solely* because of the “*power and authority*” of the Roman Catholic Church, that *nowhere in the bible does it teach worship on Sunday, and it is dishonest to say it does.*

The Roman Catholic church *challenges Protestant churches which claim their religion is based solely upon the bible, to thereafter worship on the seventh day Sabbath.*

*If same continue to worship on Sunday, it is de facto recognition of the Roman Catholic Church’s “power and authority” to change the day of worship.*

Sunday-keepers should ponder these facts:

It has been *127 years* since the editorials appeared in the *Catholic Mirror*. Yet, the challenge by the Roman Catholic Church to Sunday-keeping Protestant denominations has gone unanswered.

Apparently, the Protestant denominations agree that the Roman Catholic Church does indeed have “the power and authority” to maintain the change from the Sabbath to Sunday. The denominations do not seem willing to challenge that authority by returning to the Sabbath.

Since Constantine’s edict in CE 321 it has been *1,699 years* since the change from worshipping on the seventh day Sabbath, to Sunday was mandated.

## **The Origin Of Sunday-Keeping**

Dr. Bacchiocchi researched the possibility of Sunday-keeping in the early church at Jerusalem. He concluded that it was futile to search for the origin of Sunday-keeping among the early Jewish converts because of their loyalty to Jewish religious practices such as keeping the Sabbath.

The historical facts from Dr. Bacchiocchi which follow usually include a Common Era (CE) time reference in parenthesis. The following events are grouped by topic, so will not necessarily be in chronological order.

After the destruction of the second Temple in C.E. 70, and leading up to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem by Hadrian in C.E. 135, Rome ruthlessly crushed the Barkokeba revolt (C.E. 132-135) and destroyed the residential area of Jerusalem. A new Roman city was built on the ruins. It was named *Aelia Capitolina* in honor of Emperor Aelius Adrian.



At that time harsh restrictions were imposed on the Jews. They were expelled from Aelia Capitolina, forbidden to re-enter the city, and prohibited from practicing their religion - particularly the seventh day Sabbath and circumcision. Rabbinical sources also mention prohibitions against observing appointed times, the study of the Torah, etc.

The repressive measures taken by the emperor against Jews affected the general attitude of Jewish converts toward their fellow Jews. Especially affected was the ethnic composition and theological orientation of the Jerusalem Church.

As a result of Hadrian's edict there was a change of the ethnicity of bishops of the Jerusalem church. The first fifteen bishops were "of the circumcision" (i.e., Jews). Later bishops were all Gentiles. Eusebius reports that the first Gentile bishop was a Greek named Marcus.

The Gentile bishops maintained the same practices as had those before them up to C.E. 135, however by that time the church had lost its political and religious prestige. Nothing much is reported by historians about the Jerusalem church in the second century. Over this same time period a chasm developed between the church of the East in Jerusalem and the church of the West in Rome.

Ultimately the church of the East refused to accept the decree of the Council of Nicaea from the West for reckoning the date of Easter, arguing that they were following the Apostle's example and authority by observing Passover on Nisan 14, (i.e., not on Easter Sunday). This difference came to be known as the Quartodeciman (Fourteener) Controversy.

Paul's Epistle to the Romans in chapter 11 and 13 show he was speaking to a church composed of Gentiles who were formerly pagans. Paul specifically said: "I am speaking to you Gentiles." As he greeted believers he mentions their Greek or Latin name. The names do not prove that Gentiles were in the majority because some Jews preferred such names. The Jewish converts were clearly in the minority in Rome.

The predominance of Gentile members and their conflict with the Jews, inside and outside the church located at Rome, seems to have resulted in a differentiation between the two believer communities. This did not occur in the church in the East.

Another developing chasm was between the Roman Church and the Synagogue.

According to the Roman historian Suetonius (ca. C.E. 70-122) in the year C.E. 49 Emperor Claudius had "expelled the Jews from Rome since they rioted constantly at the instigation of *Chrestus*." Acts 18:2 mentions that Aquila and Priscilla, although converted Jews, were expelled along with other Jews.

According to Tacitus (ca. C.E. 55-120) fourteen years after the expulsion of the Jews Emperor Nero "fastened guilt for his burning of Rome and afflicted the most exquisite torturers on a class hated for their abomination, called 'Christians' by the populace."

He did so perhaps to please the Jews since he had married Poppea Sabina, a Jewish proselyte and friend of the Jews. It is a historical fact that the Jewish residential district of Trastevere in Rome was not touched by the fire.

The Christians did not forget the role played by the Jews in the first imperial and bloody persecution they suffered, and the church fathers did not hesitate to attribute to them the responsibility of having incited Nero to persecute the Christians.

According to F. F. Bruce, "by 64 C.E. the Christians were clearly differentiated at Rome." This is thought by some to be about when Christians would have begun thinking about Sunday-keeping to distance themselves from keeping the Sabbath and other practices of the Jews. The sun-day was observed by the Romans in honor of the pagan deity Mithras.

The Romans under Nero had previously not only recognized Judaism but had to a large extent shown respect for their religious principals. Judaism experienced a favorable position under Nero.

After the death of Nero the Jews soon afterwards became unpopular in the empire. Primarily it was because of their resurgent nationalistic feelings which exploded in violent uprisings almost everywhere; Mesopotamia, Cyrena, Palestine, Egypt, and Cyprus.

Believers often were victims of the outbursts of Jewish violence seemingly because the Jews regarded them as traitors to the Jewish faith and political aspirations, and because believers outpaced the Jews in the conversion of pagans.

The Romans came to react against the Jews militarily, fiscally and literarily because of their numerous riots and insurrections. There were anti-Jewish riots also in Alexandria, Caesarea, and Antioch.

Under Vespasian about C.E. 69-79, both the Sanhedrin and the office of the High Priest were abolished, and worship at the temple *site* was forbidden. Moreover Vespasian outlawed the practice of the Jewish religion, particularly the observance of the Sabbath.

Vespasian also introduced the *fiscus judaicus* (Jewish Tax), which was intensified by Domitian in C.E. 81-96.

According to S. W. Barron the growing Christian community secured from Emperor Nerva (ca. C.E. 96 - 98) exemption from the *fiscus judaicus* tax, which indirectly, obtained for them official recognition of the severance of ties with the Jews' denomination.

Later Hadrian in C.E. 117-138 intensified the *fiscus judaicus* tax. The amount collected by the half shekel tax was insignificant. The tax was clearly discriminatory, and likely a form of punishment on the Jews. The tax marked the beginning of the social deterioration of the Jews in Roman society.

The introduction of Sunday-keeping in place of the “Jewish” Sabbath indeed seems to have been a measure taken by leaders of the church of Rome to show their severance from Judaism and thereby also avoid the payment of a discriminatory tax.

## **Literary Opposition To The Sabbath**

Justin Martin (ca. C.E. 100-165) taught and wrote in Rome. By the middle of the second century he began to literately upbraid Sabbath-keeping by the Jews.

Prior to him Ignatious in Asia Minor (ca. C.E. 110) and Barnabas at Alexandria (ca. C.E. 135) had explicitly upbraided Sabbath-keeping in their writings. But it was Justin Martin who wrote the most devastating and systematic condemnation of the Sabbath, and, the *first explicit account of worship on Sunday*.

About that same time the renown heretic Marcion (ca. C.E. 144) established his headquarters at Rome. The influence of Marcion’s anti-Judaic and anti-Sabbath teachings was felt as far as Persia and Armenia with surprising rapidity, surpassing in extension and importance all other Gnostic groups. Marcion was later expelled from the Church of Rome because of his dualistic-Gnostic views.

## **Imposition Of Fasting To Suppress Sabbath-Keeping**

Fasting on the Sabbath came to be used to further put down the Jews. Fasting was not done on the Sabbath by Jews who felt the day should be a joyful one. Fasting was imposed to make the Sabbath a time of sadness and hunger upon Jewish and pagan converts to wean them away from worshipping on the Sabbath and from all things Jewish.

Sunday-keeping was promoted by the church of Rome as a time of joy. The early church played a key role in emptying the Sabbath of its theological-liturgical significance and in urging the abandonment of its observance. It is astonishing that seemingly no one stands out as having protested these efforts, nor cited the monumental fact that the Fourth Commandment came *directly* from the Almighty Yahweh himself.

The fiscal, military, political, and literary attacks and measures against the Jews encouraged Christians to sever their ties with them. This was especially true in Rome where most of the converts were pagans. The change of the date and the manner of what were seen to be “Jewish things” such as the Sabbath and Passover, would help clarify to the authorities the distinction of the Roman church versus Judaism.

Easter-Sunday originated under Pope Sixtus about (ca. 116-126). The word Easter is a corruption of the name Eastre, the Saxon goddess of dawn. Easter-Sunday was put in place by the Roman church to oppose the observance of Passover which was regarded as “Jewish.”

Denigrating Passover was yet another way to distance the Roman church from the Jews in the eyes of the Roman Emperor.

Easter was originally observed on the Sunday following Passover, the date of which varied. Initially the date of Easter was dependent upon the date of Passover which the church at Rome obtained from the Jews each year. This was because the day of Passover varied since it is based upon the luni-solar calendar.

Later the Roman church repudiated the date obtained from the Jews and determined their own method. Today the Roman Catholic Church determines Easter as the first Sunday which occurs after the first full moon on or after the fixed date of March 21, regardless of the actual variable date of the March Equinox.

Obligatory observance of Easter-Sunday by the church in the West caused the Quartodeciman Passover Controversy. The Eastern church refused to observe Easter Sunday and continued to observe Passover on Nisan 14 as determined by the lunar-solar year using the first crescent new moon seen after the actual date of the March Equinox.

## **Conclusion**

History shows that the nationalistic aspirations of the Jews in the first two centuries of the Common Era prompted widespread violent behavior.

Those aspirations caused the Jews and things connected to them such as the Sabbath day, Passover, etc., to be hated by the Roman Emperors. The same were also hated by the early Western church whose members suffered the same fate as the Jews because they had the same religious practices.

On March 7, 321 C.E. the Roman Emperor Constantine issued an edict that officially changed the day of rest from the seventh day Sabbath, to Sunday. He did so at the behest of the then Roman Catholic Church. The Romans at that time worshiped the *sun*-god Mithras.

The Western church began to distance itself from the Jews by substituting Sunday-keeping for the seventh day Sabbath, and substituting Easter Sunday for Passover.

We should take every opportunity to provide the truth about keeping the seventh day Sabbath. That day, reckoned from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, was given to mankind by Almighty Yahweh as a sign between Him and us.