

Study Guide #13 – Sabbath Reform Prophesied

XIII. That as the man of sin, the papacy, has thought to change times and laws (the laws of God), Dan 7:25, and has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment, we find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ. Isa. 56:1, 2, 1 Pet. 1:5, Rev. 14:12, etc.

1. That as the man of sin, the papacy, has thought to change times and laws (the laws of God)

• The man of sin – the papacy:

2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4 “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

Revelation 13:18 “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”

Note: Vicarivs Filii Dei: Literally—Vicar of God’s Son. This Latin phrase is the formal title of the pope’s office, and is inscribed upon his royal 3-tiered miter or tiara, the numerical value of which equals 666. The title is of itself significant, for the word vicarivs (or vicarius) according to Cassell’s Latin Dictionary means, “One who takes another’s place, a substitute.” Thus the phrase Vicarivs Filii Dei is the Latin equivalent to the Greek antichrist (αντιχριστος), which signifies one that takes the place of Christ (the Son of God).

Ellen G. White: Paul, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, points out the power that has attempted to break down the law of God. He warns the believers concerning the great apostasy and the blasphemous antichristian power that would be developed and perform its work before Christ should come the second time. He says: ‘That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

“. . . The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” The prophet Daniel, describing the same power, says, “He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws.”

How strikingly have these prophecies been fulfilled by the Romish Church! Not only has this power attempted to change the times and laws of God, but she openly avows that she has made such changes, and she declares that by the observance of Sunday, which rests solely upon her authority, the Protestant world is acknowledging the supremacy of Rome.” (**Signs of the Times,**

June 12, 1893, par. 3, 4) [ellipses in the original]

- **Change times and laws:**

Daniel 7:25 “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

The American Catholic Quarterly Review, Vol. 8, Jan-Oct 1883, p. 139, par. 5, 6: Strange as it may seem, the State, in passing laws for the due sanctification of Sunday, is unwittingly acknowledging the authority of the Catholic Church, and carrying out more or less faithfully its prescriptions.

The Sunday, as a day of the week set apart for the obligatory public worship of Almighty God, to be sanctified by a suspension of all servile labor, trade, and worldly avocations and by exercises of devotion, is purely a creation of the Catholic Church.

It is not the Jewish Sabbath: it is, in fact, entirely distinct from it, and not governed by the enactments of the Mosaic law. It is part and parcel of the system of the Catholic Church, as absolutely as Christian marriage is or any other of her sacraments, her festivals and fasts, her days of joy and mourning, her indulgences and her jubilees.

Catholic Mirror, Sept., 1893: The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. But the Protestants say, “How can I receive the teachings of an apostate church?” “How,” we ask, “have you managed to receive her teachings all your life in direct opposition to your recognized teacher, the Bible on the Sabbath question?”

Peter Geiermann: Q. Which is the Sabbath day? **A.** Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday? **A.** We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday. (“**The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine,**” p. 50)

- **How the Sabbath began to be set aside by the papal power:**

John N. Andrews: The first great effort made to put down the Sabbath was the act of the church of Rome in turning it into a fast, while Sunday was made a joyful festival. While the Eastern churches retained the Sabbath, a portion of the Western churches, with the church of Rome at their head, turned it into a fast. As a part of the Western churches refused to comply with this ordinance, a long struggle ensued, the result of which is thus stated by Heylyn: -

“In this difference it stood a long time together, till in the end the Roman church obtained the cause, and Saturday became a fast almost through all the parts of the Western world. I say the Western world, and of that alone, the Eastern churches being so far from altering their ancient custom that in the sixth council of Constantinople, A.D. 692, they did admonish those of Rome to forbear fasting on that day upon pain of censure.”

Wm. James, in a sermon before the University of Oxford, thus states the time when this fast originated: -

“The Western church began to fast on Saturday at the beginning of the third century.”

Thus it is seen that this struggle began with the third century, that is, immediately after the year 200. Neander thus states the motive of the Roman church: -

“In the Western churches, particularly the Roman, where opposition to Judaism was the prevailing tendency, this very opposition produced the custom of celebrating the Saturday in particular as a fast-day.”

By Judaism, Neander meant the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath. Dr. Charles Hase, of Germany, states the object of the Roman church in very explicit language: -

“The Roman church regarded Saturday as a fast-day in direct opposition to those who regarded it as a Sabbath. Sunday remained a joyful festival in which all fasting and worldly business was avoided as much as possible, but the original commandment of the decalogue respecting the Sabbath was not then applied to that day.”

Lord King attests this fact in the following words: -

“Some of the Western churches, that they might not seem to Judaize, fasted on Saturday, as Victorinus Petavionensis writes: We use to fast on the seventh day. And it is our custom then to fast, that we may not seem, with the Jews, to observe the Sabbath.”

Thus the sabbath of the Lord was turned into a fast in order to render it despicable before men. Such was the first great effort of the Roman church toward the suppression of the ancient Sabbath of the Bible. (“**The History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week,**” pp. 282, 283)

Thought Question(s):

- 1. In what ways has the papacy “thought to change” the times of laws of Jehovah?
- 2. What tactics is Satan using today to cause the Sabbath of the Lord our God to be looked upon as unsavory and “despicable before men”?

2. And has misled almost all Christendom in regard to the fourth commandment

The American Catholic Quarterly Review, Vol. 8, Jan-Oct 1883, pp. 139, 140: In the very earliest period of the Church, when Gentiles were received into her bosom by baptism, some of the Jewish converts insisted “that they must be circumcised and be commanded to observe the law of Moses.” Certainly no part of the law of Moses was more distinctive or more imperative than that relating to the Sabbath. From the days of Nehemias it had been strictly enforced; the Pharisees were so strict in its observance, so severe in their construction of its obligation that in their eyes our Lord Himself and his apostles were sabbath-breakers and open violators of the law. Yet the apostles in the Council of Jerusalem say expressly: “for it hath seemed good to the Holy

Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things, that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which things keeping yourselves you shall do well.” The question before the Council was expressly what precepts or observances of the Mosaic law were to be followed by the Christians of Gentile origin, the class to which the present Christians of Europe and America almost exclusively belong. The fact that the Council enumerates some things, and makes their well-being depend on obedience to these, evidently excludes all others. **Circumcision, the sacrifices of the old law, and the Sabbath regulations all stand on the same ground. They were decided not to be obligatory on the Gentile Christians. Nor is there the slightest trace in the Acts of the Apostles or the Epistles that these Christians did observe the Jewish Sabbath, even as a work of supererogation.**

A book of popular instruction of much repute in England, while England was still Catholic, De Burgo’s *Pupilla Oculi* (Paris, 1510), fol. clxxii., 2, puts it distinctly:

“One thing is to be known, that the obligation of keeping the Sabbath of the law, according to the form of the Old Testament, expired with the other ceremonies, and thereto succeeded in the New Law the mode of celebrating the divine worship on Sundays and other festivals instituted by the authority of the Church.”

The only day of the week which under the Apostles seems to have received special attention was not the last day of the week, the Saturday or Sabbath, but the first.

Thought Question(s):

- 1. In what way(s) does the above quote mislead the Christian’s mind with regard to the Sabbath?

3. We find a prophecy of a reform in this respect to be wrought among believers just before the coming of Christ

• Repairers of the breach:

Isaiah 58:12, 13 “And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:”

Isaiah 56:1, 2 “Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.”

• Prophecy fulfilled:

Ellen G. White: [Isaiah 56:1-7 quoted]

Mark the conditions of the promise; it is to him “that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and

keepeth his hand from doing any evil.” And the time when this promise especially applies is when “My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.” There is a special work for God’s people in these last days, to turn away their feet from trampling upon the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and to exalt it before men, calling it “a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable.” (**Signs of the Times, June 12, 1893 par. 5, 6**)

Ellen G. White: The work of Sabbath reform to be accomplished in the last days is foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah: [Isaiah 56:1, 2, 6, 7 quoted].

These words apply in the Christian age, as shown by the context: “The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.” Verse 8. Here is foreshadowed the gathering in of the Gentiles by the gospel. And upon those who then honor the Sabbath, a blessing is pronounced. Thus the obligation of the fourth commandment extends past the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, to the time when His servants should preach to all nations the message of glad tidings.

The Lord commands by the same prophet: “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples.” Isaiah 8:16. The seal of God’s law is found in the fourth commandment. This only, of all the ten, brings to view both the name and the title of the Lawgiver. It declares Him to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and thus shows His claim to reverence and worship above all others. Aside from this precept, there is nothing in the Decalogue to show by whose authority the law is given. When the Sabbath was changed by the papal power, the seal was taken from the law. The disciples of Jesus are called upon to restore it by exalting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment to its rightful position as the Creator’s memorial and the sign of His authority.

“To the law and to the testimony.” While conflicting doctrines and theories abound, the law of God is the one unerring rule by which all opinions, doctrines, and theories are to be tested. Says the prophet: “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Verse 20. (**The Great Controversy, pp. 451- 452.2**)

Ellen G. White: When we began to present the light on the Sabbath question, we had no clearly defined idea of the third angel’s message of Revelation 14:9-12. The burden of our testimony as we came before the people was that the great second advent movement was of God, that the first and second messages had gone forth, and that the third was to be given. We saw that the third message closed with the words: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” And we as clearly saw as we now see that these prophetic words suggested a Sabbath reform; but as to what the worship of the beast mentioned in the message was, or what the image and the mark of the beast were, we had no defined position.

God by His Holy Spirit let light shine forth upon His servants, and the subject gradually opened to their minds. It required much study and anxious care to search it out, link after link. By care, anxiety, and incessant labor has the work moved on until the great truths of our message, a clear, connected, perfect whole, have been given to the world. (**1 Testimonies, chp. 11, pp. 78.2, 79.1**)

- **The First Angel’s message has to do with the Sabbath:**

Revelation 14:7 “Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains

of waters.”

Note: the above passage points directly to the God of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue as the one to be worshiped.

• **The remnant will keep the commandments of God:**

Revelation 14:12 “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

Ellen G. White: As the work of Sabbath reform extends, this rejection of the divine law to avoid the claims of the fourth commandment will become well-nigh universal. The teachings of religious leaders have opened the door to infidelity, to spiritualism, and to contempt for God’s holy law; and upon these leaders rests a fearful responsibility for the iniquity that exists in the Christian world. (**The Great Controversy, p 586.2**)

Thought Question(s):

- 1. In what other ways will God’s last day people be “repairers of the breach”?