

# THE LORD'S DAY IN EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

Published: Wednesday 9th of May 2018 19:39 by Simon Wartanian

URL: <https://www.thecalvinist.net/post/The-Lords-Day-In-Early-Church-History>



## The Lord's Day in Early Church History

We've tried to make a biblical case for the Christian Sabbath from Holy Scripture, which I believe to be convincing and faithful to the whole of Scripture. In this section, I would like to take a brief look at some of the writings after the New Testament which speak about the Lord's Day and the Sabbath. These writings shed light upon what Christians after the Apostles believed about the Lord's Day. Their words and practice are not authoritative for us, only the Scriptures are authoritative. But it is nonetheless interesting to see what we read in Scripture practiced and believed in church history. The following list of citations I've found in the various books listed above, especially [This Is The Day by Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott](#). Part 2 of the book focuses on the Lord's Day in church history.

Clement of Alexandria (150-215 A.D.), has a long discussion on the Fourth Commandment, but it is mystical and Gnostic in nature. The interested reader may find it [here](#), but it will *not* be treated below. This list is by no means exhaustive. The citations given below are what I could find and what I deemed helpful and understandable for this topic. Many others could be found in the work referenced above.

### Didache (50-120 A.D.)

The Didache, which means the Teaching (of the Twelve Apostles) is a document from the first century, which functioned as some kind of church manual. It is believed that it was certainly written before 120 A.D. This places it in the first century or at the most shortly thereafter. What interests us in the Didache is what is written of the Lord's Day in chapter 14:

14 **On every Lord's Day—his special day**—come together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure. 2 Anyone at variance with his neighbor must not join you, until they are reconciled, lest your sacrifice be defiled. 3 For it was of this sacrifice that the Lord said, "Always and everywhere offer me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is marveled at by the nations." ([Richardson](#))

Does it have to be pointed out that the echo of Acts 20:7 is very clearly heard in verse 1? The passage is so closely connected with Acts 20:7 that it contains the same elements there and also connects the Lord's Day explicitly with spiritual sacrifices and worship. In verse 3, Malachi 1:11 is cited.

What is more interesting about this passage is the Greek of the first part of verse 1. Literally, it reads, "On every Lord's Day of the Lord." The Greek phrase is Κατὰ κυριακὴν ἡ κυρίου (kata kuriaken de kurion), which is a strange way to refer to the Lord's Day. The word *kuriaken* is used here and it is the strong adjective meaning "belonging to the Lord" which is used in Revelation 1:10. What is interesting is that the word for "day" is absent in the Didache, though this does not cast doubt upon the fact that what is being spoken of here is, in fact, the Lord's Day. What this indicates is that the designation "Lord's Day" was so popular and in Christian usage that it was enough to use *kuriaken* without "day" (*hemera*). That this is speaking of the first day of the week is confirmed by its reliance upon Acts 20:7.

It is very interesting to see how biblical language, New Testament language to be specific, is so influential so early on. Neither the author of the Didache nor John invented the designation "the Lord's Day", but both authors use it expecting their readers to understand to which day they refer. The phrase was in common usage and was coined prior to the writing of the Didache and Revelation.

### Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 35-108 A.D.)

Ignatius of Antioch was an early church father who lived in the first century and the beginning of the second. He was martyred in 108 A.D. He wrote a letter to the Magnesians which is relevant to the Lord's Day. There is a shorter and longer version of the letter and of the chapter. Most scholars believe that only the shorter is original. In chapter 9, he speaks about the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Day. The longer version further comments upon the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, which will be noted below. In chapter 9, [he writes](#):

If, therefore, those who were brought up in the **ancient order of things** have come to the possession of a new hope, **no longer observing the Sabbath**, but **living in the observance of the Lord's Day**, on which also **our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death**—whom some deny, by which mystery we have obtained faith, and therefore endure, that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Master—how shall we be able to live apart from Him, whose disciples the prophets themselves in the Spirit did wait for Him as their Teacher? And therefore He whom they rightly waited for, being come, raised them from the dead.

Those who “were brought up in the ancient order of things” were the Jewish Christians as is obvious from the **previous chapter**. What is interesting is that those Jewish Christians, who were accustomed to the observance of the Sabbath had left their observance of the Sabbath in favor of another. They no longer observed the Jewish Sabbath, but now they are observing the Lord's Day. In fact, they are *living* in observance of the Lord's Day. That this is the Christian Sunday—first day of the week—is seen from its connection to the resurrection of our Lord, which according to the testimony of Scripture was on the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

By no longer observing the Jewish Sabbath they have not totally abandoned all observance of days, but they are observing the Lord's Day—the Christian Sabbath. They do not merely believe it, hope in it, or go to church on it, but they *observe* it as a holy day, as was the Sabbath observed and kept holy to the Lord.

While it is true that the longer version is not original, but it still reflects beliefs held by people at the time of the writing of the letter or thereafter. Therefore, it is still of interest to us to look at what is said there about the Lord's Day and Sabbath.

If, then, **those who were conversant with the ancient Scriptures** came to newness of hope, expecting the coming of Christ, as the Lord teaches us when He says, “If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me;” and again, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad; for before Abraham was, I am;” how shall we be able to live without Him? The prophets were His servants, and foresaw Him by the Spirit, and waited for Him as their Teacher, and expected Him as their Lord and Saviour, saying, “He will come and save us.” Let us therefore **no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner**, and rejoice in **days of idleness**; for **“he that does not work, let him not eat.”** For say the [holy] oracles, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread.” But **let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner**, rejoicing in **meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body**, **admiring the workmanship of God**, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, and **walking within a prescribed space**, nor finding delight in dancing and plaudits which have no sense in them. And **after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival**, the **resurrection-day**, the **queen and chief of all the days** [of the week]. Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, “To the end, for **the eighth day**,” on which **our life both sprang up again**, and the victory over death was obtained in Christ, whom the children of perdition, the enemies of the Saviour, deny, “whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things,” who are “lovers of pleasure, and not lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” These make merchandise of Christ, corrupting His word, and giving up Jesus to sale: they are corrupters of women, and covetous of other men's possessions, swallowing up wealth insatiably; from whom may ye be delivered by the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ!

The author continues with the Jewish Christians and how they believed the Scriptures and do no longer keep the Jewish Sabbath. Instead, they are keeping the Sabbath in a non-Jewish manner. In saying “Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner”, the author is not saying that we no longer have to keep the Sabbath. Rather, we are not to keep it *after the Jewish manner*, but in a Christian manner. How is this Jewish manner defined? It is defined according to the practice of the Pharisees. We read of “idleness”, “relaxation of the body”, “walking within a prescribed space” (the so-called Sabbath day's journey as in Acts 1:12). All these items were things practiced by the Jews in their Sabbath-keeping. But Christians should not imitate the Jewish manner of Sabbath observance. Rather, the Sabbath is kept spiritually.

The author is here distinguishing the Sabbath from the Lord's Day. Every friend of Christ is to keep His day as a festival. Which day might that be? The “resurrection-day”, which is the sweetest and best of all days. The Lord's Day is also called “the eighth day”. The Lord's Day is a happy day which is to be *kept* and observed in a similar manner as to the Sabbath, but not in the Jewish manner.

## Pliny the Younger's Letter on the Christians (112 A.D.)

Pliny the Younger was a Roman governor who wrote to Emperor Trajan asking for counsel on dealing with Christians. This letter was written around 112 A.D., so it is fairly early. What is of interest to us here is his reference to the day on which Christians met. He **wrote**:

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were **accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn** and **sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god**, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was **their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food**--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

In the whole letter, Christians are found guilty, but in actuality, no guilt is found in them. We must remember that this is written by Pliny, a pagan, from a pagan perspective. With all this in mind, it is still amazing what this letter tells us about the Christians and how they conducted themselves.

What is of relevance here is that the Christians had the custom to meet on a *fixed* day. They did not decide every week on which day to meet, but there was a particular *fixed* day on which they were *accustomed* to meet. Furthermore, this coming together was very early on that fixed day. I can't help but hear the echoes of Matthew 28:1 here: "toward the dawn of the first day of the week". See also Luke 24:1 ("the first day of the week, at early dawn") and John 20:1 ("on the first day of the week...while it was still dark"). The Christians tried to pattern their meeting together after the resurrection of the Lord as they read it in or heard it from the Gospel. So dedicated they were to follow Christ and His example that even their meeting together was patterned after His resurrection on the dawn of the first day of the week.

It is also interesting to see that these Christians had two services. They came at the dawn together to sing and perhaps to hear the Word of God. But they also came at another time the same day "to partake of food". This is no doubt a reference to the Lord's Supper but from a pagan point of view. It was the Lord's *Supper*, which makes sense that it was not celebrated at early dawn.

Notice the list of "to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so" which reflects commandments from the second table of the Decalogue. Hence, in accordance with that they were also trying to obey the Fourth Commandment in connection to the worship of God and coming together as a congregation.

That this was on the first day of the week is confirmed by the testimony of Scripture on this (e.g. Acts 20:7) and also from the echo of Matthew 28:1 (and the parallels) here, which were in connection to the first day of the week.

Their example is an encouragement to us that no matter the circumstances, they did not forsake assembling together as a church to worship their risen Lord as God (Heb. 10:25)!

## Epistle of Barnabas (ca. 80-120 A.D.)

The Epistle of Barnabas was written no later than 120 A.D., but it is doubted if the author thereof was Barnabas the companion of Paul. Either way, it comes from the first century and beginning of the second, reflecting beliefs at that time. It discusses a lot of things, including the Sabbath. In [chapter 15](#), we read:

Further, also, it is written concerning the **Sabbath in the Decalogue** which [the Lord] spoke, face to face, to Moses on Mount Sinai, "And **sanctify ye the Sabbath of the Lord** with clean hands and a pure heart." [Ex. 20:8; Deut. 5:12] And He says in another place, "If **my sons keep the Sabbath**, then will I cause my mercy to rest upon them." [Jer. 17:24-25] The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation [thus]: "And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made **an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.**" [Gen. 2:2] Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, "He finished in six days." This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, "Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years." [Ps 90:4; 2Pet. 3:8] Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. "And He **rested on the seventh day.**" This meaneth: when His Son, coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall **He truly rest on the seventh day.** Moreover, He says, "Thou shalt sanctify it with pure hands and a pure heart." [Ps. 24:4] If, therefore, any one can now sanctify the day which God hath sanctified, except he is pure in heart in all things, we are deceived. Behold, therefore: certainly then one **properly resting sanctifies it, when we ourselves, having received the promise, wickedness no longer existing, and all things having been made new** by the Lord, shall be able to work righteousness. **Then we shall be able to sanctify it**, having been first sanctified ourselves. Further, He says to them, "Your new moons and your Sabbaths I cannot endure." [Isa. 1:13] Ye perceive how He speaks: **Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me**, but that is which I have made, [namely this,] when, giving rest to all things, **I shall make a beginning of the eighth day**, that is, a **beginning of**

**another world.** Wherefore, also, **we keep the eighth day with joyfulness**, the day also on which **Jesus rose again from the dead**. And when **He had manifested Himself**, He ascended into the heavens.

[Scriptural references were added and the footnote references taken away.]

This is certainly interesting in many ways. The author begins by pointing to the Sabbath of the Decalogue and he connects that with the Sabbath at the creation, on the seventh day and God's rest thereon. And then he says something very weird, namely, the idea that the world will be finished in the seventh millennium after the creation. The idea is that the world shall last as long as the days of creation lasted: 6 days work, 1 day rest. Therefore, the seventh millennium is the eternal state (this passage is in no way supportive of the Premillennial scheme of things. Notice how the judgment and the end of the world is connected with the coming of Christ, which is no so in the Premillennial scheme of things.). This he connects with Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8. This may be one of the first abuses of this expression. How many times do we hear this expression used in the creation debate by old-earth creationists to justify that the days of the creation were no ordinary days. The original context of the passage has nothing to say on the topic of creation, neither of the Sabbath or when the world will end, but it has been abused in every way possible.

What the author argues is that it was impossible to keep the Sabbath in the way that it was intended. This he says in the words, "If, therefore, any one can now sanctify the day which God hath sanctified, except he is pure in heart in all things, we are deceived." It is impossible to obey God perfectly and therefore keep the Sabbath in the way that God intended. We always fall short.

But there is a way in which we will sanctify the Sabbath. This we will do in the New Creation as we enter the Eternal Sabbath. This, the author expresses in the words "having received the promise, wickedness no longer existing, and all things have been made new by the Lord" and this is also the time when we shall "be to work righteousness." Only then will we be able to sanctify the Sabbath as God wills it. Then the author moves to speak of God's displeasure at the "sanctifying" of the Sabbath by the Israelites with the words of Isaiah 1:13. The presents Sabbaths are not acceptable to the Lord, but there is a Sabbath which is acceptable to Him, namely, "the beginning of the eighth day", which is the "beginning of another world." The eternal state is when we will truly sanctify the Sabbath in all of its fullness. Then comes the part about the Lord's Day, which is here called "the eighth day". It is the eighth day because it comes after the seventh. It is symbolic of the New Creation. Because the New Creation will come on the eighth day, "Wherefore", we are to keep the eighth day. The reasoning for keeping the Lord's Day holy is based upon the idea that the New Creation will come on the eighth day, after this world. This eighth day is the first day of the week as can be seen from the fact that is referred to as the day of Christ's resurrection and His appearances to the disciples. I'm not sure if the author thinks that the Lord also ascended on Sunday.

But here we see that he believed that the eighth day was to be *kept*. It was to be kept with joyfulness and gladness because it was the day of Christ's resurrection and the day which pointed to the New World and the Eternal Sabbath there. This is the basis of their Lord's Day keeping, the resurrection of Christ and the forward-looking-element of the eighth day.

## Gospel of Peter (ca. 150 A.D.)

The Gospel of Peter is a gospel account *not* written by Peter though it claims to be a first-hand account of Peter. It is a work from the second century, around the year 150 A.D. What is of interest here is the dependence of the gospel upon the true Gospels and how it references the first day of the week. Here is a table which compares three verses from the Gospel of Peter with the canonical Gospels. The following is the translation of Raymond Brown:

Gospel of Peter	Canonical Gospels	
[34] But early <b>when the Sabbath</b> [ΤΟΥ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΥ, <i>tou sabbatou</i> ] <b>was dawning</b> , a crowd came from Jerusalem and the surrounding area in order that they might see the sealed tomb.	Matt. 28:1 <b>Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn</b> of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.	Mark 16:1 <b>When the Sabbath was past</b> , Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.
[35] But in the night in which <b>the Lord's day</b> [ἡ ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ, <i>he kuriaken</i> ] <b>dawned</b> , when the soldiers were safeguarding it two by two in every watch, there was a loud voice in heaven; [36] and they saw that the heavens were opened and that two males who had much radiance had come down from there and come near the sepulcher.	Luke 24:1-5 But on the <b>first day of the week, at early dawn</b> , they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. 5 And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"	

[50] Now at the <b>dawn of the Lord's Day</b> [τῆς Κυριακῆς, <i>tes kuriakes</i> ] Mary Magdalene, a female disciple of the Lord (who, afraid because of the Jews since they were inflamed with anger, had not done at the tomb of the Lord what women were accustomed to do for the dead beloved by them),	Matt. 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, toward the <b>dawn of the first day of the week</b> , Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.	John 20:1 Now on <b>the first day of the week</b> Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, <b>while it was still dark</b> , and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.
---	---	---

All the references to the first day of the week have been replaced with the theological name of the day—the Lord's Day. What is also interesting is the fact that only the adjective *kuriaké* is used, though there is no doubt that this passage refers to the first day of the week. This is not only seen in its reliance upon the Gospel accounts but also in that it distinguishes between the (Jewish) Sabbath and the Lord's day in vv. 34-35.

## Justin Martyr (ca. 147-161)

Justin Martyr was one of the first apologists for the Christian faith. He wrote and debated with Jews and pagans. He was martyred in 165 A.D. He is also credited with one of the most cited texts with reference to Sunday worship among Christians. The *First Apology* is believed to have been written somewhere between 155-157 A.D., though some place it between 147-161 A.D. [Cyril C. Richardson](#) dates it to 155 A.D. Either way, it was written in the second half of the second century. This work was addressed to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, who ruled from 138-161 A.D. This is what he wrote in [chapter 67](#):

And **on the day called Sunday** [τῇ τοῦ Ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρᾳ, *te tou Hiliou legomenon hemera*], all who live in cities or in the country **gather together to one place**, and the **memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read**, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the **president verbally instructs**, and **exhorts** to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and **pray**, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, **bread and wine and water are brought**, and the president in like manner offers **prayers and thanksgivings**, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But **Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God**, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, **made the world**; and **Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead**. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having **appeared to His apostles and disciples**, He **taught them these things**, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

"And on the day called Sunday", that is the Lord's Day, the first day of the week all Christians come together to one place. The reason for not using the designation "Lord's Day" is probably because he is writing to a pagan Emperor and that would not have been very intelligible to him, therefore, he used the more common name in the Roman Empire for the first day of the week. Notice the range of the people coming together: "all who live in cities or in the country". It is not a gathering of a handful of people. But all of one mind and from the same area come together as a church to worship the Lord. Notice also the things done in worship here:

1. the Bible is read ("memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read");
2. preaching based on the reading of the Bible ("the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things");
3. prayer ("Then we all rise together and pray");
4. the Lord's Supper is celebrated ("bread and wine and water are brought");
5. prayer and thanksgiving ("the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen").

After listing the things done in the service, Justin moves to explain *why* the Christians met on Sunday. Two reasons are given:

1. God made the world on the first day of the week;
2. Christ rose on the first day of the week.

The creation of the world began on the first day when God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). This is probably along the



same lines of ideas as that in the Epistle of Barnabas about the eighth day and the beginning of a new world. In this way, the Christians were expecting a new creation as was promised to us by God (2Pet. 3:13). The first day points to a new world.

The second reason that is given is the fact that Jesus rose on this blessed day. This is the consistent explanation of Christians about why we worship on Sunday: the resurrection of the Son of God! The resurrection is the epoch-changing event of all history. It is the beginning of the new creation and therefore, Christians, by observing the Lord's Day, they are having a proof of the new creation which is promised to us and which the Lord's Day points to. Within reason #2 it is also mentioned that the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples on the first day of the week (e.g. John 20:19). The resurrection and the appearances of the Lord are one reason to meet together on Sunday. Lastly, the teaching which Justin presented to the Emperor is the teaching of Christ, including what he said concerning the Christian Sunday. This last point we may doubt as it is not said in Scripture, although *it is said* that He taught them about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). But what we may not doubt is the fact that Christians met on the first day, because it is confirmed by many other testimonies.

## Eusebius of Caesarea (pre 325 A.D.)

One of the more developed statements about the transference of the day comes to us from Eusebius of Caesarea. [Michael J. Hollerich](#) believes that his commentary on the Psalms was finished prior to the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) because he “occasionally revert[s] to the subordinationist theological vocabulary that marks all of his books prior to 325”. He was also the advisor of Emperor Constantine.

What he says on Psalm 92 (which in his counting is 91) is of interest to us. The Psalm has the inscription, “A Psalm. A song for the Sabbath.” There, we read:

This present Psalm clearly teaches, on this point, that it is necessary that **leisure be made for the sabbath** and from **useless inactivity** and that they should **come together** for this same purpose; that is confession, praise, telling of God's mercy in the morning and telling his truth at night. So you see how many **things the present Psalm exhorts to be done on the day of the Resurrection (Sunday)**. The Psalm is for the sabbath, but the priests in the temple did many things, so **it does not tell us to empty the day**. The **sabbath was not commanded for the priests; but for those who could not give all their time to the service of God**, so that they might have leisure for works pleasing to God. They should do this at **intervals of six days**. But to those who fill the day with riotous living God says, 'They make false sabbaths'...and so repudiating these, **the Word, through the New Covenant, has changed and transferred the feast of the sabbath to the rising of the light and handed to us the image of a true rest, the Lord's Day**, that brings salvation, **the first**, and **the day of light on which the Saviour of the world, after all his works**, which had been done among men, and having brought back victory over death, **passed the heavenly gates and completed his work, receiving the sabbath** which pleased God and the blessed rest when his Father said 'Sit thou on my right hand...'

On that **day which is the day of the True Light and the True Sun** we ourselves have **gathered together with intervals of six days, celebrating holy sabbaths and spiritual**. We who have been redeemed through him from the nations all over the world, **do what the law had laid down for the priests to do on the sabbath. We fulfil this after a spiritual law**. We offer spiritual sacrifices and oblations, what are called the sacrifices of praise and rejoicing.

It is necessary that time be made for the observance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is to be kept holy and it is not a day of idleness. It is necessary, according to this Psalm, says Eusebius, that people should gather and come together for the purpose of worship. The things written in Psalm 92, which is a song for the Sabbath, are to be done on the Christian Sunday! That the Sabbath is a day of rest does not mean it is an empty day. Eusebius distinguishes between the priestly Sabbath and the “common” Sabbath, if I may call it so. According to him, the Sabbath was commanded for the common man, the non-priests, so that they would have a day wherein they could worship God and devote the whole day unto Him. Notice the way that he says it, “so that they might have leisure for *works* pleasing to God.” There are certainly works to be done on the Sabbath, but these are works in connection with the service of God. The Sabbath is not an empty day.

This Sabbath is kept “at interval of six days”, not whenever we want. After every six days, there should be a Sabbath day devoted to the service of God. Repudiating the false Sabbaths of the Jews, the Lord Jesus—the Word—by the New Covenant has changed the particular day of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first. Notice that it is a feast of the Sabbath. It is a day of joy and delight in God. Furthermore, it is an image of our true rest, i.e., the eternal Sabbath and it is called the Lord's Day. It is the primal day and the first day. Perhaps Eusebius, by “the first”, meant the first day of creation and used it as a reason for the change of the day as Justin Martyr did.

The Lord's Day is the day on which “Saviour of the world, after all his works...passed the heavenly gates and completed his work, receiving the sabbath”. I can't help but wonder if Eusebius had Hebrews 4 and the argument we have made for it in mind. If not, then there is a comparison between God's work at the creation and then the rest ensuing thereon, and the work

of "the Savior of the world" and the entrance to the Father's Sabbath rest. A reason why we keep the Sabbath on Sunday is because the Savior of the world entered His rest on Sunday.

We gather not on the pagan "Sunday" but on the day of the "True Light and the True Sun" (i.e., Jesus). Eusebius desires to distance the observance of Sunday from the pagan observance and name. On the day of "the True Light and the True Sun" we come together as a church and we "celebrat[e] holy sabbaths and spiritual." Our observing of the Lord's Day is a celebration of holy sabbaths and is spiritual. In our service to God on the Lord's Day, we are observing the "priestly Sabbath" in that we are to be constantly engaged in the service of God, having been freed from our secular works. In our observing the Lord's Day we are fulfilling the spiritual law and offer sacrifices which are pleasing to God.