

# The Battle Over Worship

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## 1. The Battle Over Worship

The entire great controversy between Christ and Satan, at its most basic level, is over the issue of worship. The day upon which you choose to worship, reveals which God/god you are worshipping.

From Genesis to Revelation, this is a recurring theme. In the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, there is a very interesting passage explaining the reason for Satan's fall:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High (verses 12-14.)

It was in aspiring to be "like the Most High" that Lucifer broke the first and greatest commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:37 & 38.) Lucifer did not want to simply be like Yahuwah God in character; if that had been his desire, he would never have rebelled. Instead, he coveted the honor and worship that were due to the Creator alone.

The statement: "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation" is very revealing. The word here translated "congregation" is *mo'ed*.

*Mo'ed* means "appointed place of meeting." . . . The word *mo'ed* keeps its basic meaning of "appointed," but varies as to what is agreed upon or appointed according to the context: the time, the place or the meeting itself . . . The meaning of *mo'ed* is fixed within the context of Israel's religion (The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words.)

*Mo'ed* often designates a determined time or place without any regard for the purpose. Since the Jewish festivals occurred at regular intervals, this word becomes closely identified with them . . . *Mo'ed* is used in a broad sense for all religious assemblies. It was closely associated with the tabernacle itself. God met Israel there at specific times for the purpose of revealing His will. It is a common term for the worshiping assembly of God's people (Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible, "*Lexical Aids to the Old Testament*," 1626, emphasis supplied.)

The word *mo'ed*, then, is commonly used to refer to worship times. Satan is saying, in Isaiah 14, that he will be like the Most High because he will sit on the mount of the congregation – the mountain of *mo'ed*, the mountain of worship. He will establish when to worship, and by virtue of exercising that power, steal the right to be worshiped.

The first time that *mo'ed* appears in the Bible is in Genesis 1:14: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

The word translated "seasons" is *mo'ed*. Right in the middle of Creation week, Holy Scripture records that one of the purposes of the lights in the heavens was for determining *mo'ed* – when the appointed time for worship should be. This is affirmed in Psalm 104:19 – "He appointed the moon for seasons." Again, the word "seasons" is *mo'ed* while the word "appointed" means to do, make or create. Yahshua created the moon for the express purpose of establishing the times of worship.

Which times of worship? They are all listed in Leviticus 23. Most of the chapter is taken up with listing the yearly feasts: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles. However, the very first feast listed is the seventh-day Sabbath:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings (Leviticus 23:1-3.)

The word here translated "feasts" is, again, *mo'ed*: worship times.

Daniel 7:25 speaks of Satan's use of a religious and political power to try to change the law of the Heavenly Father: "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." In the Knox translation, Satan's intent is stated even more clearly: "He shall insult the Most High, he shall torment/wear out the holy ones of the Most High, and he shall attempt to change the calendar and the ordinance." Satan, in his efforts to usurp Yahuwah's authority has not only thought to change times and laws – he has done it. He has masterfully diverted the attention of all those who sincerely desire to keep the true Sabbath. The focus has been on a Saturday versus Sunday confrontation. No one has seen that it is much larger than that. Counterfeit worship requires a counterfeit calendar. The Julian calendar, from which the modern Gregorian calendar comes, has usurped the original luni-solar calendar established by the Creator at the beginning of this world. The day on which you worship, calculated by which calendar you use, reveals whether you are pledging your allegiance to your Creator, or to that power, the god of this earth, which has set itself up in opposition to the God of heaven.

## **2. The Sabbath: Our Pledge of Allegiance**

"The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament." Revelation 11:19. The ark of God's testament is in the holy of holies, the second apartment of the sanctuary. In the ministration of the earthly tabernacle, which served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," this apartment was opened only upon the great Day of

Atonement for the cleansing of the sanctuary. Therefore the announcement that the temple of God was opened in heaven and the ark of His testament was seen points to the opening of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 as Christ entered there to perform the closing work of the atonement.

The ark in the tabernacle on earth contained the two tables of stone, upon which were inscribed the precepts of the law of God. The ark was merely a receptacle for the tables of the law, and the presence of these divine precepts gave to it its value and sacredness. When the temple of God was opened in heaven, the ark of His testament was seen. Within the holy of holies, in the sanctuary in heaven, the divine law is sacredly enshrined--the law that was spoken by God Himself amid the thunders of Sinai and written with His own finger on the tables of stone.

The law of God in the sanctuary in heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch were an unerring transcript. Thus, the divine law is sacred and as unchanging as the character of God Himself. They saw, as never before, the force of the Saviour's words: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matthew 5:18. The law of God, being a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, must forever endure, "as a faithful witness in heaven." Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. Says the psalmist: "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." "All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever." Psalms 119:89; 111:7, 8.

In the very bosom of the Decalogue is the fourth commandment, as it was first proclaimed: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.

The Protestant reformation began a work of restoring to the world truths that had been lost under the weight of centuries of paganism, tradition and assumption. As humble students of the Word of God studied, the Spirit of God impressed their hearts. The conviction was urged upon them that they had ignorantly transgressed this precept by disregarding the Creator's rest day. They began to examine the reasons for observing the first day of the week instead of the day which God had sanctified. They could find no evidence in the Scriptures that the fourth commandment had been abolished, or that the Sabbath had been changed; the blessing which first hallowed the seventh day had never been removed. They had been honestly seeking to know and to do God's will; now, as they saw themselves transgressors of His law, sorrow filled their hearts, and they manifested their loyalty to God by keeping His Sabbath holy.

Many and earnest were the efforts made to overthrow their faith. None could fail to see that if the earthly sanctuary was a figure or pattern of the heavenly, the law deposited in the ark on earth was an exact transcript of the law in the ark in heaven; and that an acceptance of the truth concerning the heavenly sanctuary involved an acknowledgment of the claims of God's law and the obligation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Here was the secret of the bitter and

determined opposition to the harmonious exposition of the Scriptures that revealed the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Men sought to close the door which God had opened, and to open the door which He had closed. But "He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth," had declared: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:7, 8. Christ had opened the door, or ministration, of the most holy place, light was shining from that open door of the sanctuary in heaven, and the fourth commandment was shown to be included in the law which is there enshrined; what God had established, no man could overthrow.

Those who had accepted the light concerning the mediation of Christ and the perpetuity of the law of God found that these were the truths presented in Revelation 14. The messages of this chapter constitute a threefold warning which is to prepare the inhabitants of the earth for the Lord's second coming. The announcement, "The hour of His judgment is come," points to the closing work of Christ's ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour's intercession shall cease and He shall return to the earth to take His people to Himself. The work of judgment which began in 1844 must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation. That men may be prepared to stand in the judgment, the message commands them to "fear God, and give glory to Him," "and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the word: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." In order to be prepared for the judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the judgment. The apostle Paul declares: "As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law, . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." And he says that "the doers of the law shall be justified." Romans 2:12-16. Faith is essential in order to the keeping of the law of God; for "without faith it is impossible to please Him." And "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23.

By the first angel, men are called upon to "fear God, and give glory to Him" and to worship Him as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In order to do this, they must obey His law. Says the wise man: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13. Without obedience to His commandments no worship can be pleasing to God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." 1 John 5:3; Proverbs 28:9.

The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. "All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens." Psalm 96:5. "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else." Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18. Says the psalmist: "Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psalms 100:3; 95:6. And the holy beings who worship God in heaven state, as the

reason why their homage is due to Him: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things." Revelation 4:11.

In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message [the warnings given by angels in Revelation 14], are keeping the commandments of God:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 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 (Revelation 14:6 & 7).

One of these commandments points directly to God as the Creator. The fourth precept declares: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:10, 11. Concerning the Sabbath, the Lord says, further, that it is "a sign, . . . that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:20. And the reason given is: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17.

"The importance of the Sabbath as the memorial of creation is that it keeps ever present the true reason why worship is due to God"--because He is the Creator, and we are His creatures. "The Sabbath therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship, for it teaches this great truth in the most impressive manner, and no other institution does this. The true ground of divine worship, not of that on the seventh day merely, but of all worship, is found in the distinction between the Creator and His creatures. This great fact can never become obsolete, and must never be forgotten."--J. N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*, chapter 27. It was to keep this truth ever before the minds of men, that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden; and so long as the fact that He is our Creator continues to be a reason why we should worship Him, so long the Sabbath will continue as its sign and memorial. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, "Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." It follows that the message which commands men to worship God and keep His commandments will especially call upon them to keep the fourth commandment.

### **3. The Sign of Loyalty**

In the issue of the great contest between the forces of good and of evil, two parties are to be developed, those who "worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark," and those who receive "the seal of the living God," and have "the Father's name written in their foreheads."

In the fourth commandment is found the seal of God's law. This only, of all the ten, brings to view 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 [the 10 Commandment Law] to show by whose authority the law was given.

The Sabbath enjoined by the fourth commandment was instituted to commemorate the work of creation. Had the seventh day always been kept, there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. The sacred observance of God's holy day would have directed the minds of men to their Creator, the true and living God. Everything in nature also would have brought Him to their remembrance; and would have borne witness to His power and love.

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. It points to God as the Creator, and is the sign of His rightful authority over the beings He has made. Those who obey this law will bear the seal of God, for He has set apart this day as a sign of loyalty between Himself and His people. To Moses on Mount Sinai He said, "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." The mark of the beast is the opposite of this,--the observance of the first day of the week as the sabbath enforced by human law. This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God.

As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite "the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of, . . . because by keeping Sunday strictly they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin." Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, page 58.

The Roman church thus declares that by observing the first day of the week as the sabbath, Protestants are recognizing her power to legislate in divine things. And it is true that those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe a false sabbath in the place of the true, are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded.

The Roman church has not relinquished her claim to supremacy; and when the world and the Protestant churches accept a sabbath of her creating, [either Saturday or Sunday on Pope Gregory XIII's calendar] while they reject the Bible Sabbath, they virtually admit this assumption. They may claim the authority of tradition and of the Fathers for the change; but in so doing they ignore the very principle which separates them from Rome,--that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." The papist can see that they are deceiving themselves, willingly closing their eyes to the facts in the case. As the movement for Sunday enforcement gains favor, he rejoices, feeling assured that it will eventually bring the whole Protestant world under the banner of Rome.

With rapid steps we are approaching this period. When the Protestant churches shall unite with the secular power to sustain a false religion, for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution: when the state shall use its power to enforce the decrees and sustain the institutions of the church,--then will Protestant America have formed an image to the Papacy, and there will be a national apostasy which will end only in national ruin.

The laws of nations should be respected as long as they do not conflict with the laws of God; but when there is collision between them, every true disciple of Christ will say, as did Peter when commanded to speak no more in the name of Jesus, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Paul wrote to the Romans, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." But there is a point beyond which it is impossible to maintain union and harmony without the sacrifice of principle. Separation then becomes an absolute duty.

Christ never purchased peace and friendship by compromise with evil. The life of Jesus, the suffering which He endured from a perverse nation, demonstrate to His followers that there must be no sacrifice of principle. Peace is too dearly obtained if purchased by the smallest concession to Satan's agencies. The least surrender of principle entangles us in the snares of Satan.

The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict, in which all the world will act a part. Men have honored Satan's principles above the principles that rule in the heavens. They have accepted the spurious sabbath, which Satan has exalted as the sign of his authority. But God has set His seal upon His royal requirement. Each Sabbath institution, both true and false, bears the name of its author, an ineffaceable mark that shows the authority of each.

The great decision now to be made by everyone is, whether he will receive the mark of the beast and his image, or the seal of the living and true God. And now, when we are on the very borders of the eternal world, what can be of so much value to us as to be found loyal and true to the God of heaven? What is there that we should prize above His truth and His law? What is so necessary as a knowledge of "what saith the Scripture?"

#### **4. Armageddon – The Battle over Worship**

The battle over worship will continue to grow and spread. Every person on planet earth must make a decision to worship the Creator on His true Sabbath, as a sign of loyalty to Him, or else to simply shrug the duty aside as not relevant to today's needs. Many will decide that as long as you worship on a seventh-day sabbath, it is as good as the seventh-day Sabbath. To secure material security, they will accept a spurious sabbath.

Many, though, will choose to stand steadfast and loyal to their Creator, worshiping Him on the day which His calendar in the sky dictates. The controversy will escalate until it reaches the point warned about in Revelation 16:13, 14 & 16:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty . . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

A great deal of speculation has arisen from the word "Armageddon" which is used only once in the entire Bible. Hollywood film writers have incorporated it into many apocalyptic, end-of-the-

world scenarios. The word itself is curious because, while Revelation appears to have been written in Greek, "Armageddon" is actually a combination of two Hebrew words. The first is *har* (#2022) which simply means "mountain."

Scholars are divided as to the second word in the combination. Some believe it is #4023: Megiddo, which was a place in Palestine. The problem with this interpretation is that when one goes to where Megiddo was there is no mountain there! In fact, there is just a valley: "the *Valley of Megiddo*" (See 2 Chronicles 35:22.)

The other option is the most accurate. It is #4150: *mo'ed*: the worshipping assemblies of Yahuwah's people. What Rev. 16:16 is referring to is the Mountain of the *Mo'edim*. In the scriptures, *mountains* are symbols of governments. (See Daniel 2, specifically, verses 34-35 and 44.) This is the same mountain referred to in Isaiah 14 where Lucifer was telling his intention of sitting on the Mount of the Congregation: he was stating his purpose to assume control of the government of Heaven and the right to be worshipped.

The lengthy controversy between good and evil has been a conflict between two different governments: a Government of Love versus a Government of Evil; a Government which gives its citizens complete freedom of choice versus a government that enslaves the wills of its citizens. Your day of worship reveals to which government you are pledging allegiance.

The battle of Armageddon is the final confrontation in the war. It is a battle between two different governments and their differing times of worship. Armageddon is the deciding battle because Yahuwah God will finally have a group of people willing to obey His law at any cost to themselves. This fight will be played out on the battlefield of the *mo'edim*, the battlefield of worship days.

Satan has spent the last 6,000 years constructing his mountain – his government, his system of counterfeit worship. The Creator, also, has a system of worship: true, holy worship. Each system has its own feast days. The sign of loyalty is the day on which you choose to worship because that is governed by either the true calendar established by Yahuwah at Creation, or a counterfeit calendar, divorced from the moon *which was created for the very purpose of revealing the times for worship*.

During creation week when the moon was created for calendation ("He appointed the moon for seasons [moe'dim]" Psalm 104:19), another role was assigned it: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."

The word translated "signs" is #226:

*Owth* means "sign; mark." This word represents something by which a person or group is characteristically marked . . . [it is used] to represent a military banner . . . The word means "sign" as a reminder of one's duty . . . (*The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

The true Sabbath is all of this, and more. The Sabbath, as calculated by the moon, is a reminder of our duty, our privilege to worship our Creator on His *mo'ed*, His appointed day of worship. It is a mark that distinguishes those who worship their Maker by the luni-solar calendar. In the final battle between good and evil, the *mo'ed* you keep is the military banner which designates on which side you stand. The day on which you worship, in a very real sense, is your pledge of allegiance to your God/god. Just as school children pledge allegiance to their country's flag, worshippers are pledging allegiance when they choose the day on which they will worship. Furthermore, the calendar they use to count to that day also reveals which God/god they are worshipping: the Creator God who made the heavens and the earth; or Satan who has sought to steal that worship by leading the world to unite in using a pagan calendar.

The final generation is described in Revelation 14:4 as a special group: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." To follow the Lamb anywhere He leads requires a complete surrender of the will. Only those who have *first* surrendered their will to the point of being *willing* to obey if it is true will recognize truth in an unpopular doctrine.

The Lamb is now inviting you to follow Him. Will you surrender your will and allow Him to lead you into all truth?