

“This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Ps 118:24)

✠ Lecture II: On Sunday Being the Lord’s Day ✠

Since the early years of Christianity, the believers consecrated the first day of the week (Sunday) for worship, rejoicing, and celebrating the glorious resurrection of our Saviour.

- “Now **on the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.” (**Acts 20:7**)
- “**On the first day of the week** let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” (**1 Cor 16:2**)

✠ The Spiritual Concept of the Lord’s Day:

St. Paul said, “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.” (**Rom 14:5,6**) – Thus, the Lord should be the focus and the goal of keeping a certain day or not.

Moreover, St. Paul warned against Jewish customs, “Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon **or Sabbaths**, which are a shadow of things to come” (**Col 2:16,17**). – He also rebuked the Galatians who followed the Judaizers saying, “How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain” (**Gal 4:10,11**).

✠ The Day of Divine Rest:

It is written in the Holy Book of Genesis, “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because in it He rested** from all His work which God had created and made.” (**Gen 2:3**) – Thus, the sanctification of the seventh day was because in it God had rested. However, we know that creating the universe was not tiring for God; He simply uttered His word and creation came into being. When the Son of God took flesh and became man, He became subject to exhaustion and weariness, “Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well” (**Jn 4:6**). The peak of our Savior’s physical and psychological exhaustion was on the cross yet after completing our salvation and redemption He rose from the dead on the third day and it became the real day of Divine rest for “if anyone is in Christ, he is **a new creation**” (**2 Cor 5:17**). – Therefore, the eighth day (Sunday) is the true day of rest and thus is sanctified by all Christians.

✠ Some Sayings of the Church Fathers:

- “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.” (St. Ignatius Bishop of Antioch – 107 AD) [*The Epistle to the Magnesians, ch. 9, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1*]
- “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.” (St Justin the Martyr – 155 AD) [*First Apology, ch. 67, The Ante-Nicene fathers, Vol. 1*]

* This lecture is adapted from ‘*Sunday, the Lord’s Day*’ by Fr. Shenouda Maher.