

was observed at least from the middle of the second century (see Socrates, E.H., V, 22). And the first recorded observance was at Rome (Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, ch.67).

All underlining throughout this entire article is mine. The **SDA** leaders want you to think that what was going on here in the second century on “the first day” of the week was some sort of “festival” activity, not to be confused with a regular day of worship, which they say took place on “the seventh day.” Then they refer us to **Justin Martyr** for “the first recorded observance” (*First Apology*, chp.67). Now, the **SDA** leaders know that giving you this reference is *somewhat risky*. Why? *Because you might look it up!* It's right there at your fingertips: THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS or ANTE-NICENE FATHERS. And when you do look it up, here's what you'll find. This is chapter 67 in its entirety. The title is: **Weekly Worship of the Christians:**

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, 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. [written AD140]

Now you see why the testimony of the Church Fathers gives **SDA** leaders so much trouble! It's quotes like this that haunts them! They want us to believe that Justin here is speaking of a “festival” which was observed *alongside of* the Sabbath. But the service he describes included Scripture reading, a brief homily, prayer, thanksgiving, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and an offering for the needy. This certainly appears to be a regular Sunday worship service. If this were a festival service held *alongside of* Sabbath worship, Justin certainly would have said something about it *in this chapter*, entitled

Weekly Worship of the Christians. Instead, he says, **“Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly.”** Further, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, written after his *First Apology*, Justin clearly affirms that the Gentile Christians of his day *did not* observe the Sabbath: “The Gentiles, who have believed on Him [Christ]... they shall receive the inheritance... although **they neither keep the Sabbath**, nor are circumcised” (chp.26). When speaking of Justin Martyr, professor and author, Walter R. Martin, said, “He also wrote the famous *Dialogue with Trypho*, a Jew, throughout which he refutes Sabbath-keeping, declaring it to be foreign to the gospel of grace and the spirit of Christianity. It is 142 chapters long.”²

Let me interject here a few words about Justin Martyr. Born about AD114, Justin was a philosopher both before and after his conversion to Christ. Writer of two *Apologies* and the *Dialogue with Trypho*, he was a prominent Christian apologist (defender of the faith) in the second century, until his martyrdom in 165. He wrote his *First Apology* at Rome about the year **140**, only **45 years** after the Apostle John received the vision of *The Revelation* at Patmos. The *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* says about Justin's works:

The writings of Justin Martyr are among the most important that have come down to us from the second century... In these works Justin professes to present the system of doctrine held by all Christians and seeks to be orthodox on all points. The only difference he knows of as existing between Christians concerned the millennium. Thus Justin is an incontrovertible witness for the unity of the faith in the Church of his day, and the fact that the Gentile type of Christianity prevailed.³

Note: At this early date, **AD 140**, the only major difference among Christians concerned the millennium. At that time they had no disagreement in weekly worship on “Sunday.”

The other Ante-Nicene Father mentioned in *Questions* is **CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA**. They state: (p141) **“The earliest authentic instance**, in early church writings, of the first day of the week being called ‘Lord's day’ was by Clement of Alexandria, near the close of the second century (see *Miscellanies* v.14).” This statement by these **SDA** leaders is just not true. **Clement** wrote *Miscellanies* in **AD194**. A century earlier, **AD 95**, **John** wrote, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day” (*Rev 1:10*). About **AD107**, **Ignatius**, Bishop of Antioch, who was himself a pupil of the Apostle John, wrote, (*To the Magnesians*, chp. 9)

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... that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Master... 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.” (*2Th 3:10*) ...let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day... the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days.

During the Sabbath He continued under the earth in the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathaea had laid Him. At the dawning of the Lord's Day He arose from the dead, according to what

was spoken by Himself, “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man also be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (*Mat 12:40*) The day of the preparation, then, comprises the passion; the Sabbath embraces the burial; the Lord's Day contains the resurrection. (*Epistle of Ignatius To the Trallians*, chp. 9)

Now you see why **SDA** leaders disregard this crucial testimony and refuse to accurately document history—it's just too damaging. Their whole system of thought would fall apart if they told the truth. This shows that Seventh-day Adventism is built on a false premise. **Ignatius** was an immediate student of the Apostle John, not only learning his doctrine, but his manners and customs. And writing only **12 years** after John wrote *The Revelation*, he says, **“Let us no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner... Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day... the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days.”** “Clement” was certainly *not* **“the earliest...”**

Something needs to be said here about the **SDA** erroneous teaching that **“the Lord's Day”** in the **NT** is the *seventh day*, and not the *first day*. From *Questions* (p129), “Christ is its Lord; the Sabbath belongs to Him. It is His day; it is the Lord's day.” Of course, they *must* hold this position, even though it flies in the face of accurate historical data. Their whole seventh-day argument would collapse if the **NT** Lord's Day is **Sunday**. So, the **SDA** leaders *hide* **“the connecting link”** between John and Ignatius. That's a must. The association with these two men is too close. They know it's absurd if they say that John's “Lord's Day” in **AD 95** is the seventh-day Sabbath, but his faithful follower, Ignatius, in **AD 107**, taught that “the Lord's Day” was “the resurrection-day”—the first day of the week! Pure nonsense! So what they do is *ignore* any testimony from the **early** second century and take you a whole century later, **100 years** after John, to **Clement of Alexandria**, **AD 194**. And by doing this, **“the connecting link” has vanished!** It's gone! They now have a **distance of 100 years** where they can begin to tell you *stories* about all kinds of “corruption” that crept into the church, and “paganism,” and “sun worship,” and before you know it, they've got you believing Satan masterminded the whole thing in an attempt to overthrow God's law by establishing his own “counterfeit Sabbath!”—Sunday!

Let's go on. About **AD 120** in **The Didache**, or **Teaching of the Twelve Apostles**, in the chapter, “Christian Assembly on the Lord's Day,” it states: “Every Lord's Day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions...” (chp.14).

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles is the oldest and simplest church manual, of Jewish Christian origin, from the end of the first century, known to the Greek fathers, but only recently discovered and published by Bryennios (1883). (*Philip Schaff*)⁴

The following quotation does not use the expression, “the Lord's Day,” but it does give further evidence for the early observance of the first day of the week as the day of worship. About **AD 120**, **Barnabas**, from *The Epistle of Barnabas* (chp.15) said: “We keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on

which Jesus rose again from the dead.” Barnabas here bears testimony to the observance of the Lord's Day in early times. And we've already seen in **AD 140**, **Justin Martyr** bears the same testimony: **“Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly.”** In **AD 170**, **Dionysius**, Bishop of Corinth in Greece, the church where Paul gave the command about Sunday collections (*1Cor 16:1,2*), said: “Today we kept the Lord's Day holy, in which we read your letter.”⁵ Then in **AD 180**, **Bardesanes** of Edessa, Syria, said: “On one day, which is the first day of the week, we assemble ourselves together.”⁶ Also, **AD 180**, **Irenaeus**, Bishop of Lyons, and pupil of the eminent **Polycarp** (*AD 69-155*), Bishop of Smyrna, who himself was a pupil of the Apostle John, said: “The mystery of the Lord's resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day.”⁷ And of him the encyclopedia says: “Irenaeus asserts that the Sabbath is abolished; but his evidence to the existence of the Lord's Day is clear and distinct... in his time the Lord's Day was an institution beyond dispute.”⁸

The celebration of the Lord's Day in memory of the resurrection of Christ dates undoubtedly from the apostolic age. Nothing short of apostolic precedent can account for the universal religious observance in the churches of the second century. There is no dissenting voice. This is confirmed by the testimonies of the earliest post-apostolic writers... The observance of the Sabbath among the Jewish Christians gradually ceased.⁹

Then we come to him whom the **SDA** leaders *jumped to* “near the close of the second century,” and he bears exactly the same testimony as his predecessors. In **AD 194**, **Clement of Alexandria**, wrote, “He... according to the Gospel, keeps the Lord's Day, when he abandons an evil disposition... glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself.”¹⁰ Clement's testimony is indeed vital in establishing the truth about “the Lord's Day” in the early church, but so is the testimony of Bardesanes, Irenaeus, Dionysius, Justin, Barnabas, The Didache, Ignatius, John, and lest we forget about **Luke**, in **AD 60**, who wrote, “Upon **the first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them” (*Acts 20:7*).

To every unbiased mind the evidence must be conclusive that the Lord's Day of Rev. 1:10 is the resurrection day, the same as it is in every instance where it is used by all the Fathers immediately following John. In not one single instance either in the Bible or in all history can a passage be found where the term the Lord's Day is applied to the seventh day, the Jewish Sabbath. This fact should be, and is decisive as to the meaning in Rev. 1:10. Even Sabbatarians themselves do not call the seventh day the Lord's Day, but always “the Sabbath day.”¹¹

Moving on to the other esteemed **SDA** doctrinal exposition, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (2006)—What do we find? The same thing again! *Not one* single “quote” in 446 pages! The only reference to the early Fathers is on page 292. The first is simply a footnote number directing to the reference section at the end of the chapter. There it says: “31. See **Justin Martyr**, *First Apology*, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*...” Here's page 292:

There is no evidence of Christian weekly Sunday worship before the second century, but the evidence indicates that by

the middle of that century some Christians were voluntarily observing Sunday as a day of worship.³¹

They're up to their old tricks again! They're doing the same thing they did in *Questions—jumping* over “evidence!” If they don't keep a **distance** in your mind, you'll figure it out! If they *jump* all the way to the “middle” of the century, you won't see “**the connecting links**” that tie everything together! By going straight to Justin, here's what they hide from you:

- **AD60**, Luke wrote, “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...”
- **AD95**, John wrote, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day”
- **AD107**, his pupil, Ignatius, wrote, “...no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in observance of the Lord's Day”
- **AD120**, this is found in The Didache, “Every Lord's Day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread”
- **AD120**, Barnabas wrote, “We keep the eighth day with joy”
- **AD140**, Justin Martyr wrote, “Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly”

Get the picture! They *know* what they're doing. If they don't succeed in keeping *that* out-of-sight, they'll have a tough time of holding you. This is an unbroken chain linked right back to the apostles. It shows what they're saying is **deceitful**. Read it again. They're *implying* that the *first* “evidence” for “**weekly Sunday worship**” is *not* available till the “middle” of the 2nd century. But they know better. They have the “evidence” right in front of them, but they keep the connecting links hidden—**Ignatius 107**, **The Didache 120**, and **Barnabas 120**. If they were honest with you, they would word it—“...the evidence indicates that by the **FIRST** of that century...” But if they told you the truth, and said, “first of that century,” that would put “weekly Sunday worship” right next to John, who died just *four years before* “that century”—**AD96**. And if the testimony of the Church Fathers right there with John is—“no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day,” the whole **SDA** story of “seventh-day Sabbath worship” throughout the entire **NT** period goes up in smoke! The light is turned on now, and everyone can see that John's “Lord's Day” in Revelation 1:10 is *not* and *could not possibly* be—“the Sabbath day!” Here's something from Walter Martin:

Adventists reason that since “the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath” (*Mark 2:27,28*), when John says he “was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day” (*Rev 1:10*), the Sabbath and the Lord's Day must be the same! Their whole argument, though, is based on the English text and not on the Greek original. There is no such interpretation inherent in the original grammatical structure. The Greek of Mark 2:28 clearly indicates that Christ did not mean that the Sabbath was his *possession* (which they would like to establish); rather, he was saying that as Lord of all he could do as he pleased on the Sabbath. The Greek is most explicit here. Nothing could be clearer from both the context and the grammar. In Rev. 1:10 the Greek is not the genitive of possession, which it would have to be in order to make *te-kuriake* (the Lord's) agree with *hemera* (day). John did

not mean that the Lord's Day was the Lord's possession, but rather that it was the day dedicated to him by the early church.¹²

Getting back now to the **SDA Believe** book, they give the 2nd and final reference to the Fathers on the same page, stating:

But, strange as it may seem, not one writer of the second and third centuries ever cited a single Bible verse as authority for the observance of Sunday in the place of the Sabbath. Neither Barnabas, nor Ignatius, nor Justin, nor Irenaeus, nor Tertullian, nor Clement of Rome, nor Clement of Alexandria, nor Origen, nor Cyprian, nor Victorinus, nor any other author who lived near to the time when Jesus lived knew of any such instruction from Jesus or from any part of the Bible.

Two comments: **(1)** The Jewish Sabbath is gone! over and done with! It ended at the cross (*Col 2:13-17*). Sunday observance is **NOT** a continuation of it. The Sabbath day has **not changed**, it has finished! Sunday is not “in the place of”—*There is no Sabbath day!* Regular public worship absolutely requires a stated day of worship. The Lord's Day *is* that day. It is of **NT origin**, and firmly established in the writings of the early Church Fathers, who clearly distinguished it from the Jewish Sabbath. The Sabbath day originated under the Old Covenant; the Lord's Day originated under the New Covenant! It is a **one-hundred percent original institution!** In no way is it to be confused with anything Jewish; the Lord's Day stands on **independent** Christian ground!

(2) They say the Fathers never “cited a single Bible verse as authority” for Sunday. I'm glad they brought the subject up! What's good for the goose is good for the gander! Talking about “Bible verses”—Why is there *no command* in all the **NT** to keep the Sabbath? Why is the fourth commandment *never* quoted in the **NT**, but the other nine commands of the Ten Commandments are there repeatedly? **1st**, to worship God only: no less than **50** times; **2nd**, idolatry: condemned **20** times; **3rd**, profanity: condemned **4** times; **5th**, honoring parents: is taught **6** times; **6th**, murder: condemned **7** times; **7th**, adultery: condemned **12** times; **8th**, theft: condemned **6** times; **9th**, false witness: condemned **4** times; **10th**, covetousness: condemned **9** times. But the duty to keep the seventh day is *not found* in the whole **NT!** Not once! There is not one single command from either Christ or his apostles to keep that day! Therefore, we say to the **SDA** leaders, Why do **you** not quote “a single Bible verse as authority” for Christians to keep the seventh day? Just one! And remember, it'll have to be from the “New Covenant” documents, we're not under the Old.¹

A Closing Word: To gain and hold their followers, **SDA** leaders will continue to do two things: **(1)** keep the testimony of the early Fathers totally out of their writings and away from their people, **(2)** keep publishing deceptive statements that utterly deny the truth of history. A good example is seen in our first quote (*col 1*): “**The seventh-day Sabbath continued to be kept by Christ's followers for several centuries.**” The emptiness of that statement is etched on every column of this tract. And here's my favorite, from **ELLEN G. WHITE** herself, taken from her famous work: *Great Controversy*¹³—words that have been etched on the minds and in the hearts of thousands

upon thousands, yea, *millions!* of her followers—“**IN THE FIRST CENTURIES THE TRUE SABBATH HAD BEEN KEPT BY ALL CHRISTIANS**” (*2002 ed., p 21*).¹⁴ And what again is the official church position on her writings?—*Questions (p 82)*: “...the writings of Ellen G. White...we as a denomination accept them as **INSPIRED** counsels from the Lord.” It's a shame that so many people have been mislead over the years by such careless and inaccurate statements by the **SDA** leaders. May this tract prove to be a much-needed corrective in this area. The voice of several 2nd century Fathers has been heard; let's hear now from a few Fathers from the 3rd century:

AD200, Tertullian of Africa: “We solemnize the day after Saturday in contradistinction to those who call this day their Sabbath” (*Apology, chp.16*)¹⁵ “We have nothing to do with Sabbaths...We have our own solemnities, the Lord's Day...”¹⁶

AD225, Origen of Egypt: “...we...observe certain days, as for example, the Lord's Day...” (*Origen Against Celsus, Book 8, 22*)

AD250, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage: “...the eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, the Lord's Day...” (*Epistle 58, 4*)

AD250, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles: “He...rose again at break of day on the Lord's Day” (*Book 5, Sec. 3, 19*) “On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's Day, assemble yourselves together...” (*Book 7, Sec. 2, 30*)

AD270, Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea: “...the Lord's Day, on which the resurrection of the Lord from death took place” (*Chp 10*) “Our regard for the Lord's resurrection, which took place on the Lord's Day, will lead us to celebrate it” (*Canon 16*)

AD300, Peter, Bishop of Alexandria: “The Lord's Day we celebrate as a day of joy, because on it, He rose again” (*Canon 15*)

AD300, Victorinus, of Austria: “...on the Lord's Day we go forth to our bread with giving of thanks” (*Creation of the World, par 4*)

SDA must **ignore** all this evidence, and go on believing the “stories” about Constantine (*AD321*), the Council of Laodicea (*AD364*) and the Pope, and how the Sabbath, somewhere in the “fourth century” (**P**) was **changed** to Sunday; and now all we have is a “counterfeit Sabbath,” a “papal substitute” for the true Sabbath.¹⁷ Far-fetched indeed! and contrary not only to well-documented facts of history, but sound reason as well.

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REFERENCES — **(1)** See our tract: **Questions that Silence “Jewish Sabbath” Keepers** **(2)** Walter R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Bethany Fellowship Pub (1977), p395 footnote **(3)** Quoted by D.M. Canright, *The Complete Testimony of the Early Fathers*, Fleming H. Revell (1916), pp24,25 **(4)** Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, IV, 56, PC Study Bible, BibleSoft **(5)** Schaff, *op. cit.*, V, 60; also Eusebius, *Ecl. Hist.*, IV, 23, 11 **(6)** *Book of the Laws of Countries*, cited from McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, *Lord's Day*, PC Study Bible **(7)** Martin, *op. cit.*, p396 **(8)** McClintock, *op. cit.* **(9)** Schaff, *op. cit.*, V, 60 **(10)** *Miscellanies*, VII, 12 **(11)** Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, Gospel Advocate Pub (2001), p190 **(12)** Martin, *op. cit.*, p395 **(13)** See our tract: “**Jesus said He Didn't Come to Destroy the Law!**” **(14)** Better Living Publications **(15)** Cited from Canright, *op. cit.*, p189 **(16)** Schaff, *op. cit.*, V, 60 **(17)** See our tract: **A “HOUSE OF CARDS”—“The Rise of Sunday Observance” by SDA**

Why “Jewish Sabbath” Keepers Run & Hide from the Testimony of the Early Church Fathers!

That's right, run and hide! That's all they can do. “Jewish Sabbath” keepers not only have **no** Scriptural support in the entire New Testament¹ (**NT**) for their seventh-day Sabbath-ness, but the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers (AD100-325) offer them nothing to substantiate their loud and boisterous claims of seventh-day worship. Nothing! This is why in their statements of faith you'll search in vain to find “quotes” from the early Fathers! These Fathers totally contradict them! And since **Seventh-day Adventists (SDA)** lead the way amongst “seventh-day” churches today, with their “Sabbath” banner held the highest, I believe they deserve the spotlight to be turned upon them in this discussion.

They think the **NT** is literally full of Sabbath commands and examples for New Covenant believers, but it's a myth. They look at Jesus (the Jew!) in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and they see Paul preaching (to Jews!) in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and to them, that equals a *mandate* that *we* keep the Sabbath too!¹ Their brain has been trained to go straight to the Ten Commandments any time they see the word “law” or “commandment” in the **NT**. They practically look down upon all evangelicals and accuse them of being “disloyal” to God for worshipping upon the first day of the week. But we have a question for them: “Do you have the support of the early church for your practice?” They *say* they do. Okay. But when you read their books, and especially their statements of faith, something is missing! Something is just not there! And this something is the testimony of the Church Fathers from the 2nd & 3rd centuries—it's nowhere! So in all honesty, if they *are* indeed following the example of the early church—Why do they steer as far away as possible from “quoting” any of the early Fathers to document and substantiate this claim? The answer is simple. The **SDA** leaders don't want you to hear what the Fathers have to say about these things!

SDA STATEMENTS OF FAITH & THE FATHERS

We want to focus our attention now on the two most important doctrinal books of the **SDA**—*Questions on Doctrine* and *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*. We'll start with *Questions*. In this huge volume of nearly 600 pages, there's not one single “quote” from an early Church Father, not one! They mention two of them, but *no* quote. The first is **JUSTIN MARTYR**. Here's the paragraph: (*p 131, 2003 ed.*)

The seventh-day Sabbath continued to be kept by Christ's followers for several centuries. But along with the Sabbath there was a growing observance of what was known as the festival of the resurrection, celebrated on the first day. This