

"The proliferation of recent studies on the calendar, both sectarian and orthodox, prompts us to add a note of caution here. The Greek phrase which we have translated *the first day of the week* and which is found in all four gospels (*mia sabbatou* or *mia tōn sabbatōn*) is not as obvious an indication of a particular "day" of a "week" as the English suggests. By the time we reach the *Didache* the plural *sabbata* certainly meant "week," and the enumeration of the days certainly makes Sunday the "first day" of the week; cf. *Didache* vi. But the notes of time in our gospels concerning the resurrection, together with the confused chronology of Holy Week, make it hazardous to say with any confidence whether the evangelists wished us to understand Saturday or Sunday at this point" (pg. 358, *The Anchor Bible: Matthew*, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, © 1971).

This is a first rate commentary by experts at the top of their field. They may have the higher critical disease, but this is what they have to say in the preface, "For much too long a time the course of New Testament scholarship has been dictated by theological, quasi-theological, and philosophical presuppositions. In far too many cases commentaries on NT books have neglected such basic requirements as up-to-date historical and philological analysis of the text itself. In many ways this preoccupation with theological and metaphysical interpretation is the unacknowledged child of Hegelianism. To this should be added the continuing and baleful influence of Schleiermacher and his successors on the whole treatment of historical material. The result has often been steadfast refusal to take seriously the findings of archaeological and linguistic research."

#### *How Israel Forgot the Truth*

Every believer who has sought the truth knows that they did not have it all at the beginning of their search. Every organization that claims to know the truth had a beginning of its search and development. No one is pure and no religious body is free from defect. Even Yeshua's disciples were not free from a muddled view of the prophecies about Him and His mission. If the Gentiles thought that they were more spiritual than these Jews, then they were mistaken. The disciples were the orthodox of the orthodox. If anyone could really claim to have received true instruction from their fathers, it was they. Yet even these were a minority of the Jews. The majority were the heterodox Hellenized sort of Jews that mixed at all times with the remnant.

At one time in Israel's history there were only 7000 that had not bowed the knee to baal. At one time the book of the Torah was lost, and the people forgot to observe the Passover. If the God of Israel had not raised up prophets and shepherds to restore the truth, it would have surely perished. If God had not acted it would have been forgotten. The Word of God has the power to transform the world around it, but apparently God's people do not have the power in themselves to preserve it. The degree of truth preservation is in the hands of Almighty God, and not in the hands of Judah or Ephraim.

The only thing that we can say for Israel is that the truth has been preserved in written form. The texts have been faithfully transmitted. The Torah has been faithfully copied as the chronology proves. Likewise, the Gospels and Epistles have been accurately copied. Yet the Jews and the Church have heaped up an ocean of tradition around them. Unlike the biblical texts, this tradition has been well mixed with lies and heresies. Both Jewish and Christian traditions contradict the written truth in many ways.

Ever since the destruction of the Second Temple Judah has been in exile along with all Israel. God's people were further cut off from the land of Israel after the second Jewish revolt, and Jerusalem was turned into a pagan city. While in exile there have always been a few scattered people, a small remnant of separated individuals or scattered groups who remembered the truth. Wherever the truth was remembered or discovered or revived for a short while, it was unable to transmit any oral or written tradition except the bible. Many individuals and small groups relative to the apostatized whole have kept the Sabbath, and have even suspected that the resurrection of Messiah was on the Sabbath among a few more scholarly individuals.

In as much as I'd like to think that our fathers kept knowledge of the Sabbath, the truth is otherwise. Even though it can be traced back three generations or more, the line comes to an end, and we find our ancestors went to Church on Sunday. And we find that their ancestors were pagan idolaters. God has been working a great reversal, but it is not because we are smarter. It is because He is summoning us out of our previous existence of paganism.

The false Church trusts in its human tradition as the final arbiter of truth. For this reason at various periods, God has reduced the revealed truth to the bible alone, and has scattered all those who would corrupt it with their manmade ideas and additions. Judgment starts first with the Jew and then with the Gentile. This is why he had the Second Temple destroyed. For they had corrupted the worship of God with their lying traditions about the Messiah.

Yet did the Gentiles escape from this Judgment? Nay! The mystery religions planned and executed their own spiritual attack on the Gentile Church. Gnosticism was born and the orthodox Church, such as it was, was defeated on all fronts, except at one point. The scriptures were copied and handed down, and some measure of orthodoxy, if you may call it that returned to a much changed and transformed Christianity. But this Christianity was infected by virulent anti-Judaism. They distrusted Jewish Christians, and accused them of perverting the scriptures. They hunted them down as heretics, and destroyed their writings.

Between the Gnostics and the heresy hunting and destroying Church of Rome, no writings survived. The Catholics went over land and sea to wipe out the truth more thoroughly and completely than Jezebel in the time of Elijah. Nothing substantial survived, except bits and traces of their destructive passage over the truth. What survived was scattered to the four winds, discovered in the texts, and then lost again.

There was a remnant that did not bow the knee to Baal. God knows who they are, and they knew Him. But they were not allowed to openly worship God or keep his Sabbaths. Neither were they allowed to make converts nor produce writings to win people back to the truth. They themselves were intellectually impoverished. They were denied a free search for the truth. They had hung onto the truth by a bare thread, and were forced into many compromises among the nations.

Few are they that have kept God laws and have not been subjected to the hatred of those around them for it. Even these were caused to forget the Sabbath in their slavery, yet they did not completely forget their faithfulness to God. History is replete with little examples of believers stubbornly hanging on to some small point of truth that they found in the Scripture in the face of the Roman Church, or in the face of the Pagans around them.