

SABBATH

When Pope Gregory XIII Changed the Calendar: Were the Days Disrupted and the Sabbath Lost?

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PR. ALMODAD AMOS YARAGWILLER 2026

Introduction

Millions of people today hold a belief that it is extremely difficult to determine exactly which day is Saturday, because at some point in calendar history, certain days were lost due to calendar reform. How much truth is there in this claim? And if indeed the calendar was changed, can the Sabbath day still be identified?

Can we know for certain that the Saturday we observe today is the same Saturday known to Moses and Jesus? The answer is very simple and clear: **Yes!** And in support of this, we have very strong and sufficient evidence.

Would God Remain Silent While the Sabbath Is Lost?

First of all, there is the evidence of the Jewish community, who have been observing the seventh day since the time of their father, Abraham, and still continue to observe it today. They have never lost it throughout all of history. Perhaps the time when it would have been easiest to lose and eventually disrupt this day would have been during the Israelites' time in the wilderness. But even then, God had a plan to preserve it safely. Exodus chapter 16 recounts a series of weekly Sabbath miracles that were repeated over forty years as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. For example, God provided manna for the Israelites to gather six days a week, but He commanded them to gather twice as much on Friday because no manna would fall from heaven on the Sabbath. (Note, this was before the Ten Commandments were given.) God again emphasized the importance of keeping the Sabbath at Sinai (Exodus 20:8-11) when He gave them the law; and it did not stop there—the Jews contin-

ued to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath until the time of Jesus' birth. The entire nation of Israel has been meticulously counting and observing time, week after week, for thousands of years. Perhaps, one individual, say a Jew who might have been imprisoned, could lose track and forget when exactly the Sabbath is, but it is utterly impossible for the entire nation and all Jews to forget or miscalculate their sacred day, which they have honored for centuries. Reflect on this.

Secondly, over 160 languages—both ancient and modern—around the world recognize Saturday as "the day of rest." For example, the Spanish word for Saturday is "Sábado," meaning Sabbath. The Russians call it "Subbota." It is clear that when these ancient languages were formed, Saturday was recognized worldwide as a day of rest and this was incorporated into the name of the day itself.

Third, God has promised to preserve the Sabbath forever. Isaiah 66:22-23 says, "For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the Lord. Can we truly believe that God would lose track of the days, and lose the Sabbath, when He has promised that it will be kept forever? This too requires further contemplation.

Fourth evidence, according to the New Testament, Jesus died on Friday and rose on Sunday, the first day of the week. The Bible says, "Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in

the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin" (Luke 23:52-54). Friday was called "Preparation Day" because it was the time to prepare for the Sabbath.

The following verses say, "The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment" (vv. 55-56). This is a good time to remember that Jesus' followers could not even finish their loving task of anointing their Lord's body for burial until the Sabbath had passed. It means they must have greatly revered and kept the commandment to "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy."

Also note that these women rested on the Sabbath "in obedience to the commandment"—meaning the fourth commandment—which says, "The seventh day is the Sabbath," so we can know they were resting on Saturday. The following verses immediately say, "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb" (Luke 24:1-2). The Good News Bible translates it as "On Sunday, very early in the morning." It is certainly not difficult to identify the seventh day of the week, and thus it is not hard to know exactly which day should be the Sabbath. Once you know that Sunday is the first day of the week, you will also know that Saturday is the Sabbath.

According to the Bible, Jesus died on Friday, the Preparation Day, which most Christians today call "Good Friday." Then He "rested" in the tomb on the seventh day, the Sabbath, which is Saturday. Then on Sunday, the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead. It is truly amazing when you think about it, that Jesus even kept the Sabbath in His death. He finished His work of salvation on Friday afternoon—saying, "It is

finished!"—and then died. He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath and then rose on Sunday morning. Why? To continue His work, now as our High Priest (Hebrews 8:1-3).

The Relationship Between Calendar Changes and the Keeping of the Sabbath

The year 1582 marks a significant historical event that is essential to understanding the relationship between calendar changes and the observance of the Sabbath. It is indeed true that in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII made some adjustments to the calendar, but it is crucial to note that the changes he implemented had nothing to do with altering the seven-day weekly cycle.

The calendar we use today is called the Gregorian calendar, named after Pope Gregory XIII, who authorized these changes. Prior to 1582, the calendar in use was the Julian calendar, established by Emperor Julius Caesar around 46 BC.

The Julian calendar had the habit of counting the year as 365 and 1/4 days long. However, the actual length of the year, based on the solar cycle, is about 11 minutes shorter than what was calculated in the Julian calendar. Over time, this discrepancy of 11 minutes accumulated each year, so by 1582, the accumulated difference amounted to 10 full days. To correct this, Pope Gregory XIII removed 10 days from the calendar.

This event took place on Thursday, October 4, 1582, and the following Friday, which would have been October 5, was instead made October 15, 1582, by Pope Gregory XIII. The purpose of this adjustment was to realign the calendar with the solar cycle, which primarily governs the seasons and the timing of the year.

It is critical to emphasize that the days of the week were not altered. Friday still followed Thursday, and Saturday still followed Friday. The seventh day, Saturday, remained unchanged, just as it had always been. This consistency is confirmed by significant institutions involved in keeping track of time and astronomical records, such as:

James Robertson, Director of the American Ephemeris, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C., states:

> "There has been no change in our calendar in the past centuries that has in any way affected the weekly cycle."

Dr. Frank Jeffries, a member of the Royal Astronomical Society and Director of Research at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, England, confirms:

> "It can be stated with certainty that no day has been lost since creation, despite all the calendar changes, and there has been no disruption in the weekly cycle."

We can boldly say then, despite the changes that were made to the calendar in 1582, the seven-day weekly cycle has remained uninterrupted. The Sabbath, observed on the seventh day (Saturday), has continued to be kept as it always has been, and the historical integrity of the Sabbath observance remains intact.

Conclusion

In all this journey throughout time, from the age of the prophets to the present day, Saturday has stood firm as an unshakable pillar. The testi-

mony of the nation of Israel, the multitude of languages across the world, and God's steadfast promises assure us that the Saturday we know today is the very same holy day that the Fathers of Faith observed with worship and reverence. Even in His death, our Lord Jesus Christ kept the Sabbath, teaching us its unyielding importance.

Despite all the changes in the calendar and the passing of centuries, the weekly cycle has remains a witness to God's faithfulness and His plan for human rest. Therefore, as we enter each Saturday, we can be assured that we are stepping into a blessed and sanctified day, one that has been set apart since the beginning. It is a day that connects us to the history of faith and prepares us for the eternal rest in His presence.

Saturday is still Saturday—a gift from our Creator, continually reminding us of His everlasting love.

ISAIAH 66:22,23

> 'For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.'

Source: A large part of this article has been taken from **The Rest of Your Life** magazine, published by The Amazing Facts Inc. with the intent to provide comprehensive education on everything you need to know about the Sabbath. To access the full magazine and learn more about the Sabbath, click here or visit the website dedicated to all things relat-

ed to the Sabbath, from Eden to the most recent updates on the Sabbath. The website is called **Sabbath Truth**.

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Injili Milele

almodad-2.github.io/injili-milele/en/

WhatsApp +255 718 834 621 · modaofhope@gmail.com

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