

**An Exposition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (1689) London Baptist Confession**  
**Chapter 22.7-8: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day**

**22.7** As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he has particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him,<sup>a</sup> which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day:<sup>b</sup> and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 20:8 <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. 16:1–2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10

**1. The Argument:**

- a. A proportion of time must to be set aside for worship of God.
  - i. This is the law of nature.
  - ii. This is by God's appointment.
- b. By perpetual moral and positive commandment, God has appointed one day in seven as a sabbath.
  - i. As a perpetual moral commandment (Genesis 2:1-3).
  - ii. As a perpetual positive commandment(Exodus 20:8).
- c. From the beginning of the world until the resurrection this was the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week (Saturday).
- d. From the resurrection this was changed to the first day of the week (Sunday, cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- e. This day is called "the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10).

**2. The problems:**

- a. Prior to Exodus, there are no commands and no history of obedience (cf. Genesis 2:1-3).
  - i. The 7th day is blessed and sanctified, but no command is given to Adam or anyone else.
  - ii. There is no mention of a sabbath or sabbath keeping until Exodus 16.
  - iii. There is no indication that ancient civilizations had a seven day week.
- b. Nature does not teach a seven day week.
  - i. Years are discerned by solar patterns.
  - ii. Months are determined by lunar patterns.
  - iii. There is no natural determinate for a weekly pattern.
- c. The Sabbath *is* positive command, but there is no positive command in the New Testament.
  - i. All explicit sabbath references in the NT, except two, are in the Gospels and Acts.
  - ii. These all pertain to Old Covenant laws and practice.
  - iii. The reference in Colossians seems to indicate fulfillment (cf. Colossians 2:16-17).
  - iv. The reference in Hebrews refers to salvation rest (Hebrews 4:9-11).
  - v. Others that address "days" (if references to sabbaths) indicate fulfillment (cf. Gal. 4:10).
  - vi. The other nine of the Ten Commandments are explicitly reiterated.
- d. There is no command or instruction regarding a change to Sunday.

**22.8** The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe a holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations,<sup>a</sup> but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15–22 <sup>b</sup> Matt. 12:1–13

1. The practice: The sabbath (Sunday) is to be kept holy after due preparation.
  - a. Common affairs (i.e., cooking, cleaning, etc.) should be done in advance.
  - b. A holy rest from all work, words, and thoughts about worldly employment should be observed the whole day.
  - c. A holy rest from all work, words, and thoughts about recreation should be observed the whole day.
  - d. The whole day should be taken up in public and private worship.
  - e. Duties of necessity and mercy are allowed.
2. The problems:
  - a. None of this is taught or commanded in the New Testament.
  - b. The OT speaks explicitly of work only -- “no recreation” is an implication or conjecture.
  - c. A definition of “work” or “employment” is highly problematic.
  - d. A definition of “recreation” is even more problematic.
    - Is mowing your lawn work, recreation, or rest?
    - Is gardening work, recreation, or rest? Cooking, reading fiction, art, etc.
    - Who is the authority for definitions and binding consciences?
  - e. The Church did not teach or practice this until after Constantine.
  - f. Many church fathers condemned sabbath keeping.

*“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” (Ignatius, c. 110).*

*“We keep the Lord’s Day, not the Sabbath, as the Jews did” (Augustine, c. 400).*
  - g. The first explicit reference to a “Christian Sabbath” isn’t until the early 12th century.
  - h. The penalty in the OT was death, what is the penalty now?