



Sabbath in the Heart of the Jewish-Christian Separation: Testimonies from Historical and Theological Sources

Christian heretic Marcion (second century C.E.): “Because it is the rest of the God of the Jews, who has created the world and has rested on the seventh day, we fast on that day in order not to accomplish on that day what was ordained by the God of the Jews” (Epiphanius, *Against Heresies* 42.3.4).

Church father Eusebius of Caesarea (fourth century C.E.): “It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews. . . . Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd” (*Life of Constantine the Great* 3.18–29; in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* [ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace; 2d Series; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983], 1: 524).

Imperial Councils (fourth century C.E.): “The Emperor Constantine to Elpidius. ‘Let all judges, the people of cities, and

those employed in all trades, remain quiet on the Holy Day of Sunday” (*Code of Justinian* 3.12.3). “Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, honoring rather the Lord’s day (Sunday) by resting, if possible as Christians. However, if any shall be found judaizing, let them be anathema from Christ” (*Canon* 29).

Church historian Augustus Neander: “The opposition to Judaism early led to the special observance of Sunday in place of the Sabbath” (*General History of the Christian Religion and Church* [trans. Joseph Torrey; 5 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1851], 1:402).

Catholic theologian Cardinal Jean Danielou: “The change from Saturday to Sunday as the day of worship . . . made a choice between two imperatives. It is understandable, in the light of the change, that conversion to Christianity could appear to

Jews as a denial of Judaism. This was a matter of conscience the importance of which I would not minimize” (quoted in Jacques Doukhan, *Drinking at the Sources* [trans. Walter R. Beach and Robert M. Johnston; Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1981], 23).

Protestant theologian Marvin Wilson: “This move to Sunday worship made it exceedingly difficult, if not virtually impossible, for the Jew to give any serious consideration to the Christian message. . . . The Jew saw the Church’s move to Sunday worship as a call to abandon the Law and embrace a ‘new covenant’ that had now replaced the ‘old covenant,’ which was thus declared ineffective and passé. In short, to become a Christian was considered as leaving behind the Jewishness of one’s past, hardly a live option for any faithful Jew to consider” (*Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989], 80).