

## IS SUNDAY SACREDNESS TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

**Introduction** A tempting fortune is waiting for the person who discovers a Bible text which records the Divine appointment of Sunday as a day of rest and worship for Christians, and commands the weekly observance of that day.

In spite of the fact that thousands of dollars have been offered for such a text, and in spite of the most painstaking research, this elusive passage cannot be found. Even the word "Sunday" does not appear anywhere in the Bible!

However, there are eight references in the New Testament to "the first day of the week", and one reference to "the Lord's day". Because serious claims for Sunday sacredness have been based upon these texts, they call for careful examination.

(See Chart No. 27—*The Sunday Temple*)

### **Discussion** THE FIRST TEXT — MATT. 28 : 1

This passage states that in the early hours of the first day of the week, after the Sabbath was past, the friends of Jesus came to visit His tomb. However, no sacred title is here given to the first day; no suggestion of sacredness is attached to it, nor is there any command for its observance.

### THE SECOND TEXT — MARK 16 : 2

This also is a straightforward historical narrative, not a command. Mark records the same visit to the tomb as Matt. 28 : 1, using slightly different words.

### THE THIRD TEXT — MARK 16 : 9

This, too, is a simple statement of fact, recording the resurrection of Jesus and His appearance to Mary Magdalene.

### THE FOURTH TEXT — LUKE 24 : 1

This passage adds little to the above, except that it explains the object of the disciples' visit to the tomb; namely, to anoint the body of Jesus. Obviously, they expected to find Him dead!

### THE FIFTH TEXT — JOHN 20 : 1

This verse also describes Mary's visit and her discovery that the tomb was open.

Obviously, these first five Scriptures need not detain us long in our search for New Testament evidence for Sunday sacredness. They simply record the fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and that His empty tomb was visited by several of His disciples in the early morning of that day.

However, these passages record no Divine **example** of first-day observance. They contain no Divine **command** for such an observance. They apply no sacred **title** to the first day, nor do they give any **reason** for its observance. On the other hand, they show that Christ's disciples treated the first day as a **common working day**, for they were prepared to embalm His body on the first day, a task which they declined to perform on the Sabbath!