



## BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER

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### Essentials vs. Non-Essentials – Non-Essentials Part 2

Shawn Nelson

#### 1. Overview

We are continuing to look at **some non-essential doctrines** that Christian denominations have exercised freedom to disagree about.

- **Last week:** (1) church government, (2) baptism details and (3) spiritual gifts.
- **This week:** (1) day of worship, (2) end-time views and (3) role of women in the church.

#### Remember:

- Christians have much that we agree about (classes 2 and 3).
- Please remember the need for sensitivity when discussing these topics (class 1). None of the topics below concern a **fundamental of the faith**, nor are they essential doctrines. They are **secondary**, non-essentials. We should be careful to exercise **charity and grace** towards those who disagree (Romans 14).

### Day of Worship

Most Christians say that **Sunday** is the proper day of worship. But some believe it's a sin to worship on any day but **Saturday** (the Sabbath).

#### 2. Some believe we must worship on Saturday.

- a. The **Ten Commandments** are **unchangeable laws for all time**. None of the other commandments have been revoked; **the others are clearly still important**. Therefore, the fourth command (to keep the Sabbath) still applies today.

Summary of Ex. 20:1-17: (1) have no other gods, (2) no idols, (3) don't take Lord's name in vain, (4) **honor the Sabbath**, (5) honor father/mother, (6) don't

murder, (7) don't commit adultery, (8) don't steal, (9) don't lie and (10) don't covet (want what you don't have).

- b. **Breaking the Sabbath in the Old Testament was sinful.** Keeping sabbath was sign of **submission** to God (Isa. 58:13). God gave the **death penalty for breaking it**.

Exodus 31:14 (ESV) – You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be **put to death**. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

- c. **Argument from the creation-week pattern.** God rested on the seventh day in the creation week (Gen. 2:2-3). Man's pattern of living is patterned on God's work of creation week. This pattern was given before the Ten Commandments—at the beginning of creation. It's a pattern for all people to follow.

Genesis 2:2–3 – And **on the seventh day** God finished his work that he had done, and **he rested** on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy**, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

- d. **Jesus observed the Sabbath.**

Mark 1:21 – And they went into Capernaum, and immediately **on the Sabbath** he [Jesus] entered the synagogue and was teaching.

- e. **Paul preached on the Sabbath.**

Acts 17:2 – And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on **three Sabbath days** he reasoned with them from the Scriptures...

### 3. Most believe we can/should worship on Sunday.

- a. **Jesus' resurrection was on a Sunday.** Other important Sunday events include the giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), post-resurrection appearances (John 20:26), John's Revelation (Rev. 1:10), and Jesus' ascension to heaven (Church tradition, *Epistle of Barnabas*).

Matthew 28:1 – Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the **first day of the week**, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

- b. The **early** church followed a regular pattern of meeting on Sundays.

Acts 20:7 – On the **first day of the week**, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

1 Corinthians 16:2 – On **the first day of every week**, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

Acts 2:1 – When the day of **Pentecost** arrived, **they were all together in one place**. (Jewish Pentecost was always the day after the Sabbath)

- c. **The Sabbath command is the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated in the New Testament.** (And there are up to New Testament 1,050 commands/imperatives.)
- d. **Sabbath worship was not included in the requirements from the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:28–29).**
- e. **New Testament/Covenant believers are not under the Old Testament/Covenant (i.e. Mosaic Law).**

Galatians 3:24–25 – So then, **the law was our guardian until Christ came**, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian...

Romans 6:14 ...you are **not under law** but under grace.

Colossians 2:16 – Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

Hebrews 8:13 – In speaking of a new covenant, he **makes the first one obsolete**...

- f. **The New Testament gives people freedom regarding which day(s) to worship.**

Romans 14:5 – One person **esteems one day as better than another**, while another esteems **all days alike**. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

g. There's strong **historical** evidence for Sunday worship.

i. **Worshipping on Sunday was near-universal practice** by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

ii. Extra-biblical evidence of this:

**Ignatius** (50-108AD) – “[We] have come to the possession of a new hope, **no longer observing the Sabbath**, but living in the observance of **the Lord’s Day**, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death...”<sup>1</sup>

The Epistle of Barnabas (70-100AD) – [contrasting the Lord’s day with the Sabbath] “Wherefore also **we keep the eighth day [Sunday] for rejoicing**, in the which also Jesus **rose from the dead**, and having been manifested **ascended into the heavens**.”<sup>2</sup>

Justin **Martyr** (100-165AD) – “**And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place**, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits... **Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly**, because... Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead.”<sup>3</sup>

**Tertullian** (155-220 AD) – “...we make **Sunday** a day of festivity.”<sup>4</sup>

iii. **Emperor Constantine**, following Christian practice, made Sunday a day of rest for civilians in 321 AD.

Constantine – “On the venerable Day of the Sun [Sunday] let the magistrates and people residing in **cities rest**, and **let all workshops be closed**...”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, “The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians,” in The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Barber Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 284.

<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr, “The First Apology of Justin,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 186.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, Book I, Chapter XIII.

## End Times Views (Eschatology)

There are many different views about how to understand future “end times” biblical events. Here’s a brief summary.

### 4. Summary of different end times views.

- a. **Views of the Kingdom**. Some believe Christ will reign on the earth literally in the future for 1,000 years (pre-millennialism). Others believe this is figurative, that the kingdom is Jesus reigning in our hearts today (a-millennialism). Others believe as more people receive the Gospel over time, the world will become more in submission to Christ (post-millennialism).

#### Literal kingdom (pre-millennialism):

Revelation 20:1, 2, 5 – 1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and **bound him for a thousand years...** 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until **the thousand years** were ended. This is the first resurrection.

Acts 1:3,6 – 3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and **speaking about the kingdom of God...** 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time **restore the kingdom to Israel?**” (**They were thinking a literal kingdom**)

#### Figurative kingdom (a- or post-millennialism):

Luke 17:20–21 (NKJV) – 20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you.**”

- b. **Understanding the book of Revelation**. Some believe it all happened in the past (**preterism**); others say it’s describing human history since Christ (**historicism**);

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<sup>5</sup> Footnote 1 in Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 379–380.

others say it tells the struggle of good and evil but not meant to be taken literally (**idealism**); still others say it's a description of real events that will take place in the future (**futurism**).

- c. **The nation of Israel**. Some believe God has a plan for the nation of Israel in the future (**dispensationalism**). Others believe the Church is the recipient of all of God's promises to the Jewish people—in short, the church “replaces” Israel (**replacement theology**).
- d. **The rapture**. There's debate about the timing of rapture (1 Thess. 4:17; 1 Cor. 15:51) and whether there even is a rapture (and tribulation) before the Second Coming (pre, mid, post-tribulationism).
- e. **Covenant theology vs. dispensationalism**. Covenant theology is part of an entire framework from the early reformers (17<sup>th</sup> c. AD). Dispensationalism is more recent (19<sup>th</sup> c. AD). Here's how each group holds points (a) to (d) above:

|                       | <b>Dispensational Theology</b>  | <b>Covenant Theology</b> |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| a. The Kingdom        | Literal kingdom (future)  | Figurative kingdom (now) |
| b. Book of Revelation | Future, literal interpretation<br>(lit. tribulation, lit. antichrist, etc.) | Any figurative view      |
| c. Israel             | Will turn to Christ in future   | Replaced by church       |
| d. Rapture            | Pre, mid, post-tribulation  | At Jesus' Second Coming  |

## Role of Women in the Church

There are two positions regarding the role of women in the church. Simply put:

- a. **Egalitarians** believe in gender **equality** in the church. Women may hold positions of leadership and authority over men. This includes ordination of women pastors and elders.
- b. **Complementarians** believe that God intends for males and females to have different **roles** both inside and outside the church (we “complement” each other). God has given the responsibility to lead to males.

## 5. Arguments women can be pastors (egalitarianism).

- a. **Adam and Eve were created to be equals.** Both, together, make up the “image of God” and both were given dominion over creation.

Genesis 1:26–27 – Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them **[both]** have dominion... over all the earth...” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; **male and female** he created them.

- b. **The Fall resulted in disorder.** Adam/Eve were equals before the Fall. After there was a less-than-ideal hierarchy. This disorder was a curse from the Fall. We don’t see subordination of females until the curse.

Genesis 3:16 (ESV) – To the woman he [God] said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to [or “for” NKJV] your husband, but **he shall rule over you.**”

- c. **Jesus undid the Fall by saving us.** When he brought salvation, he also brought this male/female equality back.

1 John 3:8b – The reason the Son of God appeared was **to destroy the works of the devil.**

Galatians 3:28 – There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is **no male and female**, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Acts 2 – The Holy Spirit fell on all believers without distinction (male and female). The explanation from Peter was to quote from the Old Testament: “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and **your daughters shall prophesy**, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and **female servants** in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.” (Acts 2:17–18)

- d. All restored humans belong to God’s church today. God gives each believer at least one spiritual gift (Heb. 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:7-11). And there’s **no indication that gender** is a factor in who receives what gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:7–11 – All these [gifts, including prophesy] are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

- e. **There are examples of women prophesying in the Bible**, so what prevents women from having the other gifts of the Spirit (like teaching or leadership)?

1 Corinthians 11:5 – but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

Acts 21:9 – He [Philip] had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

- f. **There's at least one biblical example of women teaching men** in the church.

Acts 18:26 – He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when **Priscilla [the female is named first]** and Aquila heard him [Apollos], they **took him aside** and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

- g. There is a rich history of women involved in God's service. There were **female leaders** in Israel (**Miriam**, Ex. 15; **Deborah**, Judges 4-5). Others like **Esther**, **Ruth** and **Naomi** were examples to all. Many women were instrumental to Jesus' ministry (Lk. 8:1-3). Women were also instrumental to Paul's ministry (Rom. 16:1,7)

Romans 16:1 – I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant [lit. “**deacon**”] of the church at Cenchreae...

Romans 16:7 (NKJV) – Greet Andronicus and Junia [**female**], my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, **who are of note among the apostles**, who also were in Christ before me.

## 6. Arguments only men should be pastors (complementarianism).

- a. **Male headship is established in the creation account.** Adam was created **first** (Gen. 2). At one point, Adam was alone without a woman. He **received instructions** from God when he was alone (Gen. 2:16-17).

Genesis 2:16–17 (NKJV) – “And the LORD God commanded **the man [Eve not created yet]**, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of



the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

- b. **Eve was created from Adam’s rib and was intended to be his helper.**

Genesis 2:18 (NKJV) – And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

The Hebrew says: עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ

Literally “a helper” (*ezer*) who is “opposite, [a] counterpart” (*neged*) of him.<sup>6</sup>

- c. **People can have different roles but still be equals.** Adam and Eve were equal in essence (they are both fully human and in the “image of God”). But they each have different functional roles. This is **like the Trinity**. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equal in essence, yet distinct in their role in our salvation.
- d. **After the Fall, God summoned Adam, not Eve** (Gen. 3:9). The New Testament says **Adam was held responsible** for both of their actions (Rom. 5:12). Adam “heeded the voice” of his wife (Gen. 3:17) when **he should have been the leader**.
- e. **Paul says women should not teach or have authority over men.** He was explicitly writing to Timothy about who should be leaders in the church.

1 Timothy 2:11–12 – **Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.** I do not permit a woman to **teach** or to **exercise authority** over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

- f. This command to prohibit women from teaching/being in authority **was not based on the culture of Paul’s day**, but there was a theological reason: Adam was created first. In short, it’s based on God’s created order.

1 Timothy 2:13–14 – **[Continuing previous passage...]** For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

- g. **All of Jesus apostles were male.** Jesus was **establishing a pattern** of male leadership for the church age (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 21:14).

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<sup>6</sup> William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 226.

- h. **The biblical qualifications for a pastor imply a person must be male.**  
Pastor/elders need to be the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6).
- i. **Women are supposed to be submissive to their husbands** because that's God's created order for the family unit (Eph. 5:22-23; Col. 3:18-4:1; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). Two people cannot be the head of the household. God is concerned about order (1 Cor. 14:33-36).

Ephesians 5:22–23 – **Wives, submit** to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the **husband is the head of the wife** even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

## Bibliography & Resources

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