

*The International Date Line
and
God's Sabbaths*

*Is the IDL part of the
Mark of the Beast?*

By Samuel V. Mercado

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Table of Contents

Introduction.	1
International Date Line is Non-Biblical.	3
Violating the Sabbath Day.	4
First Sabbath Kept in Eden.	6
The Annual Sabbaths.	8
Keeping the Sabbath with Our Messiah.	8
Sunday Worship and the Resurrection.	9
Conclusion.	10

And by the seventh day God had completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because He rested from all His work in it, which He had created and made. Genesis 2:2&3

“And it shall be that from New Moon to New Moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says Jehovah. Isaiah 66:23

Introduction

Antonio Pigafetta (c. 1490 – 1535) was the first circumnavigator on Earth to discover that a day was lost when travelling westward. During the westward journey of the survivors of the *Victoria* back to Spain, the official chronicler of Magellan's expedition sighted the Cape Verde Islands, located northwest of Africa. Pigafetta noted:

“On Wednesday, the ninth of July [1522], we arrived at one of these islands named Santiago, where we immediately sent the boat ashore to obtain provisions. And we charged our men in the boat that, when they were ashore, they should ask what day it was. They were answered that to the Portuguese it was Thursday, at which they were much amazed, for to us it was Wednesday, and we knew not how we had fallen into error. For every day I, being always in health, had written down each day without any intermission. But, as we were told since, there had been no mistake, for we had always made our voyage westward and had returned to the same place of departure as the sun, wherefore the long voyage had brought the gain of twenty-four hours, as is clearly seen.”

Two years and 10 months earlier, Fernando de Magallanes (c. 1480 - 1521), the famous Portuguese explorer and navigator took command of the 270 men in a five ship armada, which departed from San Lucar de Barrameda, Spain on September 20, 1519. The Portuguese colonizers sailed to the Spice Islands and Indonesia via the eastward route that Pope Alexander VI had granted them as their monopoly in 1493. To avoid this papal decree Magellan led his Spanish armada in a search for the Spice Islands via the uncharted west.

While in South America, Magellan lost one ship, the *Santiago* and its crew, during an exploratory trip. Another ship was lost when the crew of *San Antonio* mutinied and sailed back to Spain, carrying the fleet's food supplies with them. With three ships remaining, the malnourished Magellan and his starving men discovered the vast Pacific Ocean and its islands, including Guam and the Pearl of the Orient.

In the Philippines, they first anchored a few days in the uninhabited

Homonhon Island for replenishment. Sailing in the evening along the coast of southeastern Panaon Island, they saw a bright light shining from another island and headed towards it. The light came from Limasawa, Southern Leyte - "Asia's Cradle of Christianity." Magellan and his men waited off the island until daybreak. Later on, they exchanged gestures of friendships with Rajah Kulambo. Kulambo and his "barangay" welcomed them with drinks, foods, and festivities. Magellan and Friar Pedro de Valderama introduced Catholicism with a Mass to the inhabitants on Easter Sunday, March 31, 1521.

About a week later, they proceeded to Cebu in which Magellan introduced the Santo Nino (The Holy Child) and the cross to Rajah Humabon. Magellan and some of his men unfortunately met their fate in Mactan, a flat island east of Cebu. Lapulapu, the chieftain of Mactan, killed Magellan when the explorer landed on its shore. Juan Sebastian del Cano, a former mutineer against Magellan, assumed command of the few European survivors and a Malayan.

They abandoned and burned the *Concepcion* for lack of crew. Then they sailed to the Spice Islands and eventually achieved their ultimate goal. Loaded with spices, the *Trinidad* tried to sail back to the Pacific Ocean to guarantee that one ship would make it home. Strong winds prevented the ship from sailing eastward and the Portuguese later seized it. From Indonesia, the *Victoria* and its crew sailed westward. They managed to evade and cross their enemies' trade routes in the Indian Ocean, and went around the coast of South Africa.... Finally, they returned to Spain on September 6, 1522. The 18 survivors were the first sailors carrying the flag of Spain to circumnavigate the world.

The inquisitive person might ask, "Who was right? Since Pigafetta and the Portuguese traveled from Southern Europe in opposite directions, was Pigafetta accurate in dating his logbook or was it the Portuguese?"

If both were Jewish or Sabbath-observing Christians and had met on Saturday in accordance with Pigafetta's logbook, the Portuguese in Cape Verde Islands would be working on the day that Pigafetta would be keeping as holy.

International Date Line is Non-Biblical

Where in the Bible did Jehovah God say that His people in the East are to observe the Sabbath day ahead of His people in the West? Did He command the Filipinos, the 3rd largest English-speaking nation, to keep the Sabbath nine hours ahead of the United Kingdom, which is the 2nd largest English-speaking nation? Did God order the Australians to worship on the seventh day of rest ahead of the Americans?

When man invented rapid means of transportation and communication, and the industrial revolution spread throughout the world, it became an economic and social necessity to fix a standard date. According to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, “in August 1884 the U.S. Congress authorized President Chester A. Arthur to convene an International Meridian Conference, which would consider a proposal for a system of world time zones and a common zero degree of longitude, and recommend acceptance of it.” They ignored the calendar of the Holy Bible that had been used for almost six millennia.

Man, not God, set the current International Date Line as the standard date change position for the midnight-to-midnight calendar. (For more detail read *A History of the International Date Line*, at <http://www.phys.uu.nl/~vgent/idl/idl.htm>)

The International Date Line (IDL) is an imaginary longitudinal zigzag line running from the North Pole through the Bering Strait between Alaska and Siberia, going down the middle of the Pacific Ocean and to the South Pole. It deviates eastward to avoid dividing Siberia, westward to include the Aleutian Islands with Alaska, and eastward to make the date of certain islands in the Southwest Pacific the same as in New Zealand.

The IDL is 180 degrees from the Greenwich Meridian – the “zero degree of longitude” - running through Greenwich, England. Areas west of the IDL are one day ahead of areas to the east of the date line. For example, when one travels westward across the date line, they change from Saturday to Sunday. When one travels eastward across the same date line at the same time, they change from Sunday to Saturday.

Physics demonstrates that light travels in straight lines, so naturally the sunset shadow along the IDL should be straight from North to South on the equinoxes. But the zigzags in the IDL alter this. When it is Friday sunset in the Aleutian Islands, it is supposedly Saturday sunset in Eastern Siberia.

In other words, these two groups of Sabbath keepers, despite observing the same sunset at the same moment, are keeping two different seventh days. (The days of the biblical calendar start in the evening. The Sabbath (the seventh day) begins on Friday evening in most of the world. (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31)).

The Creator of planet Earth did not authorize the zigzag International Date Line. The International Meridian Conference authorized it. They were responsible for tampering with God's sacred calendar! Though light travels in a straight line, for their own convenience they deliberately bent the IDL around Eastern Siberia and the Aleutian Islands.

The Philippines provides an excellent example of the arbitrary nature of the IDL. From 1565 to 1845, since the first Spanish Governor-General Miguel Lopez de Legaspi (c. 1510 – 1572) had established Spain's Far East colony, the Filipinos had followed the calendar date of the Latinos in Central and South America and the North Americans. Two centuries and 8 decades later, Governor-General Narciso Claveria "*issued a proclamation announcing that Monday, 30 December 1844, was to be immediately followed by Wednesday, 1 January 1845.*" For 280 years, the religious holidays began in Spain, then moved to Latin America and were finally observed in the Philippines. After this date change the religious holidays began in the Philippines, then moved to Spain and were finally observed in Latin America. Both of these date reckoning sequences could not be right.

Violating the Sabbath Day

What then is the significance of the International Date Line? To the non-Sabbath keeping world, to the material-oriented inhabitants of today's society, it has economic and social values. But for the Jews and

Seventh-day Christians living in the East, it can cause them to live in sin!

If, as we show below, the present IDL is wrong, it means that the Sabbath-observing churches, synagogues and individuals living west of the IDL and east of the Garden of Eden have been violating the Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:8-11). The correct Sabbath observance in the entire region east of Eden and west of the IDL has been lost for centuries!

Observing the true Sabbath, including the annual Sabbaths (Leviticus 23:3-41), is the sign between God and His chosen people throughout their generations (Exodus 31:13-17, Exodus 13:3-10, Hebrews 4:4-10). The Israelites and the converted Gentiles are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it as an everlasting covenant. "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17).

From the Far East to parts of the Middle East, the Sabbatarians are unknowingly keeping the Sabbath on the sixth day instead of the seventh day. The Sunday worshippers of these areas are observing around 18 hours of the actual seventh day Sabbath. Nevertheless, those who are working regularly on the Sabbath, including the non-Christians, have part of the Mark of the Beast by virtue of the IDL!

The beast (Satan) that influenced the location of the IDL deceives everyone in the East, famous and insignificant, billionaire and homeless, citizen and foreigner, into receiving the mark (Revelation 13:16-17). On the Sabbaths, Bible-believing Christians avoid buying, selling and working or doing business, which are some of the marks of the beast. (For more information on the Mark of the Beast look at: <http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sbs777/prophecy/mob.html>).

The beast has also inspired the European Union to change their calendars so Sunday now appears to be their seventh day of the week. The United Nations plans to copy this beast-inspired calendar. This will make it harder for people to really know which day is the seventh day of the week.

But why should we care about the beast and its mark? Because those who do not worship the beast and refuse to receive its mark will be in the first resurrection. They will be seated on thrones and given authority to judge. They will be the priests in the Kingdom of God on Earth. Those who have God's mark will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Ezekiel 9:1-10, Revelation 20:4-6).

If the current IDL is wrong, where did God originally place His date line, where is it now and where will it be in the future?

First Sabbath Kept in Eden

Eden may have been located near Jerusalem. If so, Eden/Jerusalem is about 9.5 hours west of the IDL. The Bible shows that God was already in Eden with Adam and Eve on the sixth day (Genesis 1:27-31). He did not need to travel westward from the IDL to rest in Eden after finishing His Creation. The Bible plainly states that,

“And by the seventh day God had completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” (Genesis 2:2)

Prior to the first Sabbath, God had created Adam and Eve on the sixth day, so they could rest with Him:

“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because He rested from all His work in it, which He had created and made.” (Genesis 2:3)

“Jehovah God planted the Paradise of Eden to the east, and He put the man whom He had formed there.” (Genesis 2:8)

Therefore, the first Sabbath began at the site of Adam and Eve's original home about 6,000 years ago. It did not start at the IDL, which has existed only for a few centuries. The Sabbath was made for man, not for the fish and the whales in the mid-Pacific Ocean (Mark 2:27).

Later God established his Tabernacle in Jerusalem, near Eden. Extending Romans 1:16 suggests that the Sabbath, like the gospel, should go to the Jew first, then to the other nations.

As God's Sabbath began at Eden, the true Date Line must also be there. Moving the date line eastwards to the mid-Pacific Ocean makes

the Sabbath begin there - 9.5 hours too early and over a third of the globe too far to the east. Substituting man's International Date Line for God's Date Line through the Garden of Eden means that the people living between Eden and the IDL are observing their Sabbath a day too early.

The Sabbath, which starts in the evening, moves westward from the site of the Garden of Eden, and covers the globe as the Earth rotates on its axis. It takes 24 hours for the seventh-day Sabbath to return back to its point of origin, which then becomes the first day of the week or Sunday. Under the IDL, the seventh day in the East is actually the sixth day of the week, occurring before the real Sabbath begins.

So we see that the first Sabbath of the creation week (Gen. 1:1-31) is the key to understanding how God's Sabbaths work. When the first Sabbath started in Eden (just after Friday sunset according to secular calendars), as it is on the original Date Line, the rest of the world was still in the sixth day. About 12 hours later, as the Earth rotated on its axis and dusk moved westward from the Garden of Eden, the Sabbath had covered everything west of Eden almost to the main Hawaiian Island. Half of the Earth was in the first seventh or Sabbath day, while the other half was still completing the sixth day or Friday.

So the Sabbatharians living west of Eden, occupying most of Africa, Europe and the Americas, must observe the Sabbath day ahead of those living east of Eden. They must rest and worship God on the Sabbath from Friday evening to Saturday evening, the same as they do presently!

Meanwhile, the Sabbatharians living east of Eden (most of Russia, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, etc.) have to work and wait until the seventh-day Sabbath reaches them after moving across most of the world. The Seventh-day keepers in the East must keep the Sabbath behind their brethren in the West.

Thus, the Sabbath keepers living east of Eden/Jerusalem and west of the IDL must remember that their secular calendars are one day out. For them, the Seventh-day Sabbath begins at dusk Saturday evening and continues until dusk Sunday evening.

The Annual Sabbaths

The same principle applies to the Annual Sabbaths as well. Indeed, the Annual Sabbaths confirm the use of “Eden” as God’s Date Line. The dates of the Annual Sabbaths are determined on the basis of the observance of the New Moon in the evening at Eden/Jerusalem. There are some months where the New Moon will not be visible in Japan or New Zealand at their evening time, but may be visible at Jerusalem 8 or 9 hours later.

If they use the IDL, they will be starting their new month hours before they know if the New moon will be visible in Jerusalem or not. In the case of the seventh month, the first day of the month is the Feast of Trumpets, a Holy Sabbath. It is much better to begin their sacred days after Jerusalem, so they can be sure that they are observing the correct days.

Keeping the Sabbath with Our Messiah

When our Messiah returns as the King of Kings and the Lord of the Sabbath, He will establish his headquarters in Jerusalem (Acts 1:9-12, Matthew 12:8 and 24:27-31, Ezekiel 43:1-9). He, His angels, the transformed Christians and the survivors of Armageddon will be the first to observe the weekly and annual holy days in Jerusalem. They will be the first to rest from their work, to celebrate the evening Sabbath, to worship, to enjoy their dinner and fellowship. The following day, they will be the first to have a potluck meal after their daytime Sabbath services. The IDL corrupts this divine order.

If we have electronic communications then, Christ’s sermon will be progressively telecast around the world as the Sabbath moves into each area. Before the Sabbath reaches them, His people in other regions of the globe will be working and preparing for the day of rest. Then they too will observe the Sabbath in their homes and churches as it comes eventually into their respective time zones.

All of the people living east of Jerusalem and west of today’s IDL will observe the holy days following the Israelites:

“And it shall be that from New Moon to New Moon, and

from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says Jehovah." (Isaiah 66:23)

The weekly and annual Sabbaths have not been, and will not be done away with. As an example, God warns us that He will punish the nations that do not keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16-19). The Feast of Tabernacles is a foretaste of Christ's millennial rule on Earth.

The entire world will then acknowledge that God's date line goes through or near the temple in Jerusalem where His Son will be living. Since the Messiah's calendar is designed for spiritual reasons, unlike the world's system which is made for economic and social purposes, His weekly and annual Sabbaths will enrich the lives of all people, including those living near God's date line. The survivors of the Great Tribulation and the new generations born during the Thousand Years of Peace will be excited and delighted to keep God's Sabbaths in the coming Kingdom of God on Earth.

Sunday Worship and the Resurrection

Many Christians say, "We worship on Sunday because we believe that Christ was resurrected on Sunday. The Sabbath was nailed on the cross!"

They reject these biblical facts: Christ came not to change the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). The Bible shows that He was crucified on the Passover day. Even the Encyclopaedia Britannica and other respected reference books agree with this. However, in the year of Christ's crucifixion the Passover was on Wednesday, not on the fixed Friday that is observed as part of Easter. Jesus was placed inside the sepulchre just before the evening began the annual Sabbath (not the weekly Sabbath) - This Sabbath was the first holy day of the seven Days of Unleavened Bread (Luke 23:53-54).

Christ's resurrection after being dead for 3 days and 3 nights was the sign that He was and is the Messiah (Matthew 12:39-40). It was early Sunday morning, before dawn, that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to the sepulchre and found that it was

already empty (Mark 16:1-6). Jesus Christ was resurrected just before the end of the Sabbath day - late Saturday afternoon, not on Sunday morning! This is explained in detail in *God's Calendar and the Sign of Jonah*, available at <http://www.chcpublications.net/GodCal-SgnJnh.pdf>

Christ's death and resurrection did not change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Satan has deceived millions of Christians into believing that the seventh-day Sabbath was either changed or nailed on the cross. It was the list of our sins against God's Laws which was nailed to the Cross, not God's Laws! Satan has used the world's economic, social and religious establishments to convince billions of people to violate Jehovah God's weekly and annual Sabbaths, and thus receive the Mark of the Beast.

Conclusion

In 1522, man discovered that a day was lost when Magellan's surviving crewmen sailed westward and circumnavigated the world. In 1884, men agreed on their International Date Line, which God did not authorize. It deceived all the Sabbath-keepers living east of the Garden of Eden and west of the International Date Line into violating the Fourth Commandment and receiving the Mark of the Beast!

The very first Sabbath originated in Eden, where the Creator put Adam and Eve. It is where the new moons are first observed that begin each month on God's Sacred Calendar. Jerusalem is also the place where Jesus will begin each Sabbath during the Millennium of Peace.

Having God's Holy Spirit and honoring His seventh-day Sabbath are signs between God and His people of the everlasting covenants! Those who love God and keep His commandments do not have the Mark of the Beast. The Word, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, and the same One who died for all mankind said,

“For anyone who does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and My sister and My mother.” (Matthew 12:50) Jeshua (Jesus) also said, “If you love me, keep my commandments,” (John 14:15)

Six millennia ago, the Lord of the Sabbaths rested on the Seventh

Day from His works of creation. God began His Sabbath day not at today's International Date Line, but in the beautiful Paradise of Eden! Let us follow His example and truly honor God's Sabbaths.

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