

Pagan Names

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I. I was asked recently if we should not call the days of the week by the names that pagans gave them after the names of their gods over a thousand years ago. This sermon will answer that question.

II. The names of the days of the week and of some of the months of the year are indeed pagan in origin and were named after false gods.

1. "The names of the days of the week in many languages are derived from the names of the classical planets in Hellenistic astrology, which were in turn named after contemporary deities, a system introduced by the Roman Empire during Late Antiquity [3rd-8th century AD]. In some other languages, the days are named after corresponding deities of the regional culture, either beginning with Sunday or with Monday." (*Names of the days of the week*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
2. The Romans didn't start using a seven day week and naming the days after the planets until the late first century, and it was not commonplace until the 4th century.

A. "Between the 1st and 3rd centuries, the Roman Empire gradually replaced the eight-day Roman nundinal cycle with the seven-day week. The earliest evidence for this new system is a Pompeiian graffito referring to 6 February (*viii idus Februarius*) of the year AD 60 as *dies solis* ("Sunday"). Another early witness is a reference to a lost treatise by Plutarch, written in about AD 100, which addressed the question of: "Why are the days named after the planets reckoned in a different order from the 'actual' order?". (The treatise is lost, but the answer to the question is known; see planetary hours).

"The Ptolemaic system of planetary spheres asserts that the order of the heavenly bodies, from the farthest to the closest to the Earth is: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon, or, objectively, the planets are ordered from slowest to fastest moving as they appear in the night sky.

"The days were named after the planets of Hellenistic astrology, in the order: Sun, Moon, Mars (*Ares*), Mercury (*Hermes*), Jupiter (*Zeus*), Venus (*Aphrodite*) and Saturn (*Cronos*).

"The seven-day week spread throughout the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity. By the 4th century, it was in wide use throughout the Empire, and it had also reached India and China." (*Names of the days of the week*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)

- B. As the above quote shows, the pagan names for the days of the week were not used during the time the New Testament was being written.
- C. So the fact that they are not used in the NT is not an argument against using them.
3. The names of the week that we use today came from the Germanic people sometime between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD.
 - A. "The Germanic peoples adapted the system introduced by the Romans by substituting the Germanic deities for the Roman ones (with the exception of *Saturday*) in a process known as *interpretatio germanica*. The date of the introduction of this system is not known exactly, but it must have happened later than AD 200 but before the introduction of Christianity during the 6th to 7th

centuries, i.e., during the final phase or soon after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. This period is later than the Common Germanic stage, but still during the phase of undifferentiated West Germanic. The names of the days of the week in North Germanic languages were not calqued from Latin directly, but taken from the West Germanic names." (*Names of the days of the week*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)

4. The etymology of the names of the days of the week

A. Sunday

- i. "Old English *Sunnandæg* (pronounced ['sunnʔndæj]), meaning "sun's day". This is a translation of the Latin phrase *dies Solis*. English, like most of the Germanic languages, preserves the day's association with the sun. Many other European languages, including all of the Romance languages, have changed its name to the equivalent of "the Lord's day" (based on Ecclesiastical Latin *dies Dominica*). In both West Germanic and North Germanic mythology, the Sun is personified as Sunna/Sól." (*Names of the days of the week*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)

B. Monday

- i. "Old English *Monandæg* (pronounced ['moʔhʔndæj]), meaning "Moon's day". This is equivalent to the Latin name *dies Lunae*. In North Germanic mythology, the Moon is personified as Máni." (Ibid)

C. Tuesday

- i. "Old English *Tiwesdæg* (pronounced ['tiʔwezdæj]), meaning "Tiw's day". Tiw (Norse *Týr*) was a one-handed god associated with single combat and pledges in Norse mythology and also attested prominently in wider Germanic paganism. The name of the day is also related to the Latin name *dies Martis*, "Day of Mars" (the Roman god of war)." (Ibid)

D. Wednesday

- i. "Old English *Wodnesdæg* (pronounced ['woʔdnezdæj]) meaning the day of the Germanic god Woden (known as Óðinn among the North Germanic peoples), and a prominent god of the Anglo-Saxons (and other Germanic peoples) in England until about the seventh century. This corresponds to the Latin counterpart *dies Mercurii*, "Day of Mercury", as both are deities of magic and knowledge. The German *Mittwoch*, the Low German *Middeweek*, the *miðviku-* in Icelandic *miðvikudagur* and the Finnish *keskiviikko* all mean "mid-week"." (Ibid)

E. Thursday

- i. "Old English *Þunresdæg* (pronounced ['ʔuʔhrezdæj]), meaning 'Þunor's day'. *Þunor* means thunder or its personification, the Norse god known in Modern English as Thor. Similarly Dutch *donderdag*, German *Donnerstag* ('thunder's day'), Finnish *torstai*, and Scandinavian *torsdag* ('Thor's day'). "Thor's day" corresponds to Latin *dies Iovis*, "day of Jupiter" (the Roman god of thunder)." (Ibid)

F. Friday

- i. "Old English *Frigedæg* (pronounced ['friʔjedæj]), meaning the day of the Anglo-Saxon goddess Fríge. The Norse name for the planet Venus was

Friggjarstjarna, 'Frigg's star'. It is based on the Latin *dies Veneris*, "Day of Venus." (Ibid)

G. Saturday

- i. "Named after the Roman god Saturn associated with the Titan Cronus, father of Zeus and many Olympians. Its original Anglo-Saxon rendering was *Sæturnesdæg* (pronounced ['sæturnezdæg]). In Latin, it was *dies Saturni*, "Day of Saturn". The Nordic *laugardagur*, *leygardagur*, *laurdag*, etc. deviate significantly as they have no reference to either the Norse or the Roman pantheon; they derive from Old Nordic *laugardagr*, literally "washing-day". The German *Sonnabend* (mainly used in northern and eastern Germany) and the Low German *Sünnavend* mean "Sunday Eve"; the German word *Samstag* derives from the name for Shabbat." (Ibid)

5. The etymology of the names of the months of the year

A. January

- i. "The month of January is named after Janus, the Roman god of gates and doorways. Janus is represented with two heads that are back to back, which signifies that he is looking back at the past for perspective, as well as forward to the future for hope. His duality perfectly coincides the end of one year and the start of the next." (*This is Where the Names of the Months Come From*, Alex Daniel - www.bestlifeonline.com, 2-25-2019)

B. February

- i. "The name February is derived from the Roman period of Februa, which was a festival of purification. Also called the festival of Lupercalia, it was named after the Roman God Februus, who represented purification. In fact, William Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar* begins during Lupercalia. Mark Antony is instructed by Caesar to strike his wife Calpurnia, in the hope that she'll be able to conceive. This festival took place on the 15th day of the month and involved some usual cleansing rituals to improve health and fertility." (Ibid)

C. March

- i. "March, the third month of our calendar, was formerly the first month of the year in the Roman Calendar. It's named after Mars, the Roman god of war, and also identified with the Greek god Ares. This month was considered the time to resume war, once the winter thawed out. As the Romans viewed war and fighting as a means to gaining lasting peace, this idea can provide an alternative perspective to the quote, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." (Ibid)

D. April

- i. "April is the month of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty. (In the Roman pantheon, she's known as Venus.) The word April comes from the Latin word *apeire*, which means to open, likely in connection with flower buds opening to bloom in the spring." (Ibid)

E. May

- i. "May is derived from the French word *Mai*. It is named after *Maia*, the goddess of spring and growth. *Maia* is also the daughter of *Faunus*, one of the oldest Roman deities and the wife of *Vulcan*. Also, in Greek mythology,

Maia is known as the mother of Hermes. The Greeks and Romans saw Maia as a nurturer filled with warmth and plenty—kind of like May." (Ibid)

F. June

- i. "June is named after Juno, the Roman goddess of love and marriage, and also the de facto deity-counselor of the Roman state. (Hera is her Greek equivalent.) In Roman mythology, Juno watched over pregnant woman and children and insured safe births, which is why getting married in June is considered good luck." (Ibid)

G. July

- i. "July was initially known as Quintilis, or "the fifth month," which it was on the Julian calendar. July was named in honor of Julius Caesar after his death in 44 B.C.E., as he was born during this month. In fact, July is the first month of the calendar which is named after a real person." (Ibid)

H. August

- i. "The month of August was originally called Sextilis, from the Latin word sextus, meaning six. Its name was changed in honor of the Roman emperor Augustus, Julius Caesar's great-nephew. Augustus was an emperor who brought peace to a very conflicted area, and inspired growth, reform, and a stronger infrastructure within its cities. ... It became the eighth month in 700 B.C.E. when January and February were moved to the beginning of the year on the Gregorian system." (Ibid)

I. September

- i. "Just like Quintilis and Sextilis, September comes from the Latin term septem, meaning seven. September was originally the seventh month in the ancient Roman calendar—which was 10 months long—until 153 B.C.E. when it became the ninth month of the year. For the Romans, September was known for the celebration called Ludi Romani, which lasted several weeks and featured chariot races, gladiatorial contests, and lots of feasts." (Ibid)

J. October

- i. "October is derived from the word octo, which means eight, as it was the eighth month of the Roman calendar, and later became the tenth month with the Gregorian calendar." (Ibid)

K. November

- i. "November is derived from the Latin word novem, which means nine. Just like the others, its name stuck, even after January and February were added to the calendar, making November the eleventh month." (Ibid)

L. December

- i. "December comes from the Latin word decem, meaning ten. It was the tenth month of the Julian calendar, and now the twelfth month of the Gregorian one. The Latin name is derived from Decima, the middle Goddess of the Three Fates, and the one who personifies the present." (Ibid)

III. Is it wrong for Christians to use these pagan names?

1. There are numerous examples in the Bible of people and places that were named after pagan gods.

2. Their pagan names were used by the apostles through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures, even after the people bearing the names were converted.
3. Consider these examples:
 - A. **Belteshazzar (Dan 1:7)**
 - i. Belteshazzar - (bel-te-shaz ìBalaʿ-su-uʿur (Bel), protect his life”). The Babylonian name given to the prophet Daniel (Dan. 1:7). See Daniel. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - ii. King Nebuchadnezzar named Daniel Belteshazzar after the name of his pagan god (**Dan 4:8**).
 - iii. Notice that Daniel refused to eat the king's meat (**Dan 1:8**) and to pray to the king (**Dan 6:7-11**), but he did not refuse to be called after the name of the king's pagan god (**Dan 4:9, 18, 19**).
 - iv. Daniel, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, said that his name was Belteshazzar (**Dan 4:19; Dan 10:1**).
 - a. If it was sinful to refer to Daniel by the name of a pagan god, the Holy Spirit would not have recorded it as his name.
 - b. If it's not a sin for the scripture to call one of God's prophets by the name of a pagan god, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
 - B. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 1:7)**
 - i. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were all three given Babylonian names (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) which were names after pagan gods.
 - a. Shadrach - (sha'drak; apparently Akkad. *Shudur*, “command of,” and Sumerian *Aku*, the moon god). The name, however, may be simply a corruption of Marduk, the city god of Babylon. It is the Babylonian name given to Hananiah, the chief of the three Hebrew youths. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - b. Meshach - Possibly means "who is what Aku is?" in Akkadian, *Aku* being the name of the Babylonian god of the moon. In the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament this is the Babylonian name of Mishael, one of the three men cast into a blazing furnace but saved from harm by God. (behindthename.com/name/meshach)
 - c. Abednego - (a-bed'ne-go; “servant of Nego or Nebo”). The Babylonian god of wisdom, connected with the planet Mercury. Abednego was the Aram. name given by the king of Babylon’s officer to Azariah, one of the three Jewish youths who, with Daniel, were selected by Ashpenaz (master of the eunuchs) to be educated in the language and wisdom of the Chaldeans (Dan. 1:3–7). (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - ii. Like Daniel, they refused to eat the king's meat (**Dan 1:8**), and they also refused to worship the image the king made (**Dan 3:12**), but they did not refuse to be called after the names of the king's pagan gods (**Dan 3:14, 26, 28, 29**).
 - iii. Daniel, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit called them by their pagan names (**Dan 2:49; Dan 3:13, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 30**).

- a. If it was sinful to refer to the three children by the names of pagan gods, the Holy Spirit would have only called them by their Hebrew names.
- b. If it's not a sin for the scripture to call three of God's servants by the name of pagan gods, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.

C. Esther (**Est 2:7**)

- i. Esther - The Jewish maiden chosen by Ahasuerus to be queen. Esther was the new, and probably Persian, name given on her introduction to the royal harem. Her proper Heb. name was *Hadassah*, "Myrtle" (which see). As to the signification of Esther, it is "Ishtar," the name of the great Babylonian goddess. Gesenius quotes from the second Targum on Esther: "She was called Esther from the name of the star Venus, which in Greek is Aster (i.e., *aster*, English, 'star')." (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
- ii. A book of the Bible is called *Esther* which is the name of Ishtar the Babylonian goddess of fertility.
- iii. Esther's original Hebrew name, *Hadassah* was only used one time in the book of Esther before her name was changed to *Esther* (**Est 2:7**).
- iv. The Holy Spirit refers to her as *Esther* dozens of times in the book of Esther (**Est 2:8, et al**).
- v. If it was a sin to refer to Hadassah as *Esther* which is the name of a pagan goddess, then the Holy Spirit would have called her Hadassah, not Esther.
- vi. If it's not a sin for the scripture to call a woman by the name of a pagan goddess whom God raised up to be the queen of the Persian empire in order to save the Jews from annihilation, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
 - a. The name *Friday* "is based on the Latin *dies Veneris*, "Day of Venus." (Names of the days of the week, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
 - b. If a Jewish Queen of Persia and a book of the Bible can be called *Venus* (Esther) without it being sin, then the 6th day of the week certainly can be.

D. Apollonia (**Act 17:1**)

- i. Apollonia - Gr. *belonging to Apollo*, the name of several towns in the Mediterranean world, so called in honor of the Greek sun god Apollo. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
- ii. The Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write the name of a city named after the Greek sun god Apollo.
- iii. If it was sinful to refer to a city by the name of a pagan god, the Holy Spirit would have inspired Luke to call the city by another name which is common in scripture (**Gen 28:19; Jdg 19:10**).
- iv. If it's not a sin to call a city after the name of a pagan god, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
 - a. The name *Sunday* means "sun's day" (Names of the days of the week, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)

- b. If a Greek city can be called by the name of the sun god (Apollo) without it being sin, then the 1st day of the week certainly can be.

E. Apollos (**Act 18:24**)

- i. Apollos - Etymology: from *Apollo* + *-s*. 1. Plural of Apollo (wiktionary.org)
- ii. "Apollo is one of the Olympian deities in classical Greek and Roman religion and Greek and Roman mythology. The national divinity of the Greeks, Apollo has been recognized as a god of archery, music and dance, truth and prophecy, healing and diseases, the Sun and light, poetry, and more. One of the most important and complex of the Greek gods, he is the son of Zeus and Leto, and the twin brother of Artemis, goddess of the hunt. Seen as the most beautiful god and the ideal of the kouros (ephebe, or a beardless, athletic youth), Apollo is considered to be the most Greek of all the gods." (*Apollo*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
- iii. Apollos, an eloquent preacher of the gospel (**Act 18:24**), was named after the pagan god Apollo.
- iv. It was commonplace for people in the Bible to be renamed after their conversion (**Joh 1:42; Act 13:9; Gen 17:5; Gen 32:28**).
- v. If it was sinful for Christians to call a man by the name of a pagan god, then certainly the apostles would have renamed him.
- vi. Since they didn't rename him, but continued to use his given pagan name (**1Co 16:12; Tit 3:13**), it is clear that it is not sinful to call a man after the name of a pagan god.
- vii. If it's not a sin to call a preacher after the name of a pagan god, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
 - a. The name *Sunday* means "sun's day" (*Names of the days of the week*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
 - b. If a Christian preacher can be called by the name of the sun god (Apollo) without it being sin, then the 1st day of the week certainly can be.

F. Artemas (**Tit 3:12**)

- i. Artemas - contraction of Gr. *Artemidoros*; *gift of Artemis*, i. e., Diana. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
- ii. "Artemis is the Greek goddess of the hunt, the wilderness, wild animals, the Moon, and chastity. The goddess Diana is her Roman equivalent. Artemis is the daughter of Zeus and Leto, and the twin sister of Apollo. She was the patron and protector of young girls, and was believed to bring disease upon women and relieve them of it. Artemis was worshipped as one of the primary goddesses of childbirth and midwifery along with Eileithyia. Much like Athena and Hestia, Artemis preferred to remain a maiden and is sworn never to marry." (*Artemis*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
- iii. Paul's helper Artemas was named after a pagan Greek goddess, Artemis.
- iv. If it was sinful for a saint to go by the name of a pagan god, then Paul would not have called him (her?) that and would have renamed him.

- v. If it's not a sin to call a man after the name of a pagan god, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
- G. Athens (**Act 18:1**)
- i. Athens - a city named after the patron goddess Athene and the capital of the important Greek state of Attica, which became the cultural center of the ancient pre-Christian world. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - ii. The Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write the name of a city named after the Greek goddess Athene.
 - iii. If it was sinful to refer to a city by the name of a pagan goddess, the Holy Spirit would have inspired Luke to call the city by another name.
 - iv. If it's not a sin to call a city after the name of a pagan goddess, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
- H. Castor and Pollux (**Act 28:11**)
- i. Castor and Pollux - The Dioscuri, i. e., sons of Jupiter; Castor being a horse-tamer, and Pollux (Gr. *Polydeuces*), the master of the art of boxing. They were the ideal types of bravery and dexterity in fight, and thus became the tutelary gods of warlike youth. They were supposed to lend their aid to the mariner, who, in case of a storm, prays to them, and vows to sacrifice a lamb to them as soon as the storm ceases. The ship in which Paul sailed from Malta had for its sign Castor and Pollux (Act 28:11). (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - ii. Paul and Luke sailed in a ship named after two pagan gods, Castor and Pollux.
 - iii. Luke specifically mentions, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the ship was named after these pagan gods.
 - iv. If it is a sin to call a ship by the name of a pagan god, or to even utter the name of a pagan god, then the Holy Spirit and Luke are guilty of sin.
 - v. It was not necessary to give the sign of the ship, so Luke could have easily omitted it if it was sinful to utter.
 - vi. If it's not a sin to call a ship after the name of pagan gods, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
- I. Hermas and Hermes (**Rom 16:14**)
- i. Hermas - Gr. *Hermas, Mercury* (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - ii. Hermes - the Greek name of Mercury (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - iii. "Mercury is a major god in Roman religion and mythology, being one of the 12 Dii Consentes within the ancient Roman pantheon. He is the god of financial gain, commerce, eloquence, messages, communication (including divination), travelers, boundaries, luck, trickery and thieves; he also serves as the guide of souls to the underworld." (*Mercury (mythology)*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
 - iv. Paul's brethren in Christ, Hermas and Hermes, were named after the pagan Roman god, Mercury.

- v. If it was sinful for saints to go by the name of a pagan god, then Paul would not have called them that and would have renamed them.
- vi. If it's not a sin to call a man after the name of a pagan god, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
 - a. The name *Wednesday* "corresponds to the Latin counterpart *dies Mercurii*, "Day of Mercury." (*Names of the days of the week*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
 - b. If a Christian saint can be called *Mercury* without it being sin, then a day of the week certainly can be.

J. Mars' Hill (**Act 17:22**) and Areopagus (**Act 17:19**)

- i. Mars' Hill - Gr. *Aries Pagos*, hill of *Aries*, the Greek god of war, Roman Mars, Act 17:22), another name for the *Areopagus* (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
- ii. Areopagus - The Hill of Ares, the Greek god of war, equivalent to Roman Mars. Mars' Hill is thus the Lat. form of Areopagus. It is the name of a bare rocky place, some 377 feet high, immediately NW of the acropolis of Athens and separated from it by a narrow declivity. Steps cut in the rock lead to the summit, where benches, rough and rock hewn, can still be seen. In ancient times the Areopagus court assembled at this spot. The word *Areopagus* in Acts 17:19, 22 may refer either to the hill or to the court that met there. In either case, Paul's speech was in all likelihood on this hill as the customary meeting place of the court. This court was composed of city fathers and in early times exercised supreme authority in political as well as religious matters. Although largely a criminal court in the age of Pericles, in Roman times it had reverted once more to interest in educational and religious matters. It is quite understandable, therefore, that this court took hold of Paul and brought him to its judges in session, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?" (Acts 17:19). The Areopagus court, it is true, met at intervals in the Stoa Basileios, or Royal Stoa. If this happened to be the case when Paul was in Athens, then the famous apostle gave his address (Acts 17:22–31) in the stoa. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
- iii. The Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write the name of a hill, Mars' Hill, named after the Greek god *Mars*.
 - a. If it was sinful to refer to a hill by the name of a pagan god, the Holy Spirit would have inspired Luke to call the hill by another name.
 - b. If it's not a sin to call a hill after the name of a pagan god, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.
- iv. In fact, the month of March is named after Mars, as is the third day of the week, Tuesday (see above).
- v. If it was not a sin for the Holy Spirit and a Christian (Luke) to call a hill by the name of the Greek god *Mars*, then neither is it a sin for a Christian to call the third month of the year and the third day of the week a name that comes from Mars either.

K. **Olympas (Rom 16:15)**

- i. "The name Olympas obviously comes from Olympus, the actual mountain in Greece where Greek mythology situated its pantheon of Twelve Olympian Gods, headed by Zeus." (*Olympas meaning*, [Abarim Publications](#))
- ii. Olympus - A mountain in the north of Thessaly, the fabled abode of the greater gods of ancient Greek mythology; hence applied to heaven as the divine abode; rarely, to the sky. (OED)
- iii. One of the saints in the church of Rome, Olympas, was named after the mountain where the Greek gods supposedly abode.
- iv. If it was sinful for a saint to go by the name of a dwelling place of pagan gods, then Paul would not have called him (or her) that and would have renamed him.
- v. If it's not a sin to call a man after the name of a pagan god, then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god.

L. **Zenas (Tit 3:13)**

- i. Zenas - shortened form of Zenadorus, *gift of Zeus* (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
- ii. Zeus - 1. *Myth.* Name of the supreme deity of the ancient Greeks; cf. Jupiter. (OED)
- iii. Paul's helper, Zenas, was named after the supreme Greek god, Zeus.
- iv. If it was sinful to be named after a pagan god, then it would be the most sinful to be named after the supreme god of the Greeks.
- v. If anyone would have needed a name change it would have been Zenas, but Paul never did so, and the Holy Spirit recorded his name in the scriptures.
- vi. If it's not a sin to call a man after the name of a pagan god (especially Zeus), then it follows that it is not a sin to call a day of the week or a month of the year after a pagan god as long as using that name is not an act of worship of a false God.
 - a. The name *Thursday* "corresponds to Latin *dies Iovis*, "day of Jupiter" (*Names of the days of the week*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)
 - b. If a Christian can be called by the name of the supreme Greek god Jupiter (Zeus) without it being sin, then the 5th day of the week certainly can be.

4. Five out of seven days of the week which are named after pagan gods share those same (or equivalent) names with Christians or places in the Bible.

A. Sunday

- i. *Sunday* is named after the sun god (see Section II, 4)
- ii. *Apollo*s and *Apollonia* are named after Apollo the sun God (see above).

B. Tuesday

- i. *Tuesday* is named after the god *Mars* (see Section II, 4)
- ii. *Mars' Hill* and *Areopagus* are named after *Mars* (see above).

C. Wednesday

- i. *Wednesday* is named after the god *Mercury* (see Section II, 4)
- ii. *Hermas* and *Hermes* are named after *Mercury* (see above).

D. Thursday

- i. *Thursday* is named after the god *Jupiter* (see Section II, 4)

- ii. *Zenas* is named after *Jupiter* (*Zeus*) (see above).
 - E. Friday
 - i. *Friday* is named after the god *Venus* (see Section II, 4)
 - ii. *Esther* is named after *Venus* (see above).
 - F. If it was not sinful for the apostles and the Holy Spirit to call people and places by the names of pagan gods, then it is not sinful for Christians to call the days of the week by those same names.
- 5. If pagan names are used as an act of worship, then it is sinful to use them.
 - A. For example, when pagans saw Paul heal a crippled man they thought Barnabas and Paul were gods (**Act 14:8-11**).
 - B. They therefore named Barnabas *Jupiter* and Paul *Mercurius* which were the names of pagan gods (**Act 14:12**).
 - i. Jupiter - 1. a. The supreme deity of the ancient Romans, corresponding to the Greek *Zeus*; the ruler of gods and men, and the god of the heavens, whose weapon was the thunderbolt. (OED)
 - ii. Mercury - 1. A Roman divinity, identified from an early period with the Greek *Hermes* (son of *Jupiter* and *Maia*), the god of eloquence and feats of skill, the protector of traders and thieves, the presider over roads, the conductor of departed souls to the Lower World, and the messenger of the gods; represented in art as a young man with winged sandals and a winged hat, and bearing the caduceus. (OED)
 - C. They then tried to worship them which Paul and Barnabas would not allow (**Act 14:13-18**).
 - D. In this case since the names were used to worship pagan gods, it was not acceptable for Paul and Barnabas to be called *Mercurius* and *Jupiter*.
 - E. But in the numerous cases cited above, when pagan names were not used in the worship of pagan gods, it was fine call those people and places by those names.
 - F. In fact, Christians were called by these very names (*Jupiter* and *Mercury*) by Paul himself:
 - i. *Zenas* (*Zeus* or *Jupiter*) (**Tit 3:13**)
 - ii. *Hermes* and *Hermas* (*Mercury*) (**Rom 16:14**)
- 6. The Jews used the pagan Babylonian calendar.
 - A. The Jews adopted the names of the months from the pagan Babylonian calendar into their Hebrew calendar after the Exile.
 - i. "Before the Exile the individual months were usually designated by numbers (the twelfth month occurs in 2 Kings 25:27; Jer. 52:31); yet we find also the following names: "Ear month" (Heb. *?odesh ha'abib*; Ex. 13:4; 23:15; Deut. 16:1), corresponding to the later *Nisan*; "Bloom month" (*?odesh ziw*; 1 Kings 6:1, 37), the second month; "Rain month" (*yera? bûl*; 6:38), the eighth month; "Freshet month" (*yera? ha'etanim*; 8:2), the seventh month; all of which seem to be mere appellatives. Occasionally the months were newly numbered after the postexilic period.

"After the Exile the months received the following names: (1) *Nisan* (Neh. 2:1; Esther 3:7), the first month, in which the Passover was held and in which the vernal equinox fell; (2) *Iyâr* (Targum on 2 Chron. 30:2); (3) *Sivân* (Esther 8:9); (4) *Tammûz*; (5) *Ab*; (6) *El?l* (Neh. 6:15), the last month of the civil year in the postexilic age; (7) *Tishri*, in which the festivals of the Day of Atonement and Tabernacles fell; (8) *Marchesvân* (Josephus *Ant.* 1.3.3); (9) *Chislêu* (Neh. 1:1; Zech. 7:1); (10) *Tebêth* (Esther 2:16); (11) *Shebât* (Zech. 1:7); (12) *Adâr* (Esther 3:7; 8:12). (*Time, Month*, Unger's Bible Dictionary)

- ii. "The year begins in spring, and is divided into reš šatti "beginning", mišil šatti "middle", and qit šatti "end of the year". The word for "month" was ar?u (construct state ara?). The chief deity of the Assyrians is assigned the surplus intercalary month, showing that the calendar originates in Babylonian, and not later Assyrian times.

"During the 6th century BC Babylonian captivity of the Hebrews, the Babylonian month names were adopted into the Hebrew calendar. The Assyrian calendar used in Iraq and the Levant also uses many of the same names for its months, such as Iyyar, Tammuz, Ab, Elul, Tishri, and Adar. Finally, the Turkish incorporated some (but not all) of these Assyrian month names as part of their own calendar." (*Babylonian calendar*, [Wikipedia](#), 2-17-2021)

- iii. The Jews used the Babylonian names for their months and they were recorded in scripture through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

B. The Babylonian names of the month

i. Nisan (**Neh 2:1; Est 3:7**)

- a. Nisan - (ni'san; Heb. *ni'an*, from Akkad. *nisanu*, "beginning, opening"). The first month of the sacred year, called Abib in the Pentateuch, for which it is substituted only in the time of the captivity (Neh. 2:1; Esther 3:7). *See* Calendar; Time. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)

ii. Sivan (**Est 8:9**)

- a. Sivan - (se-van; Heb. *siw an* from Akkad. *sim'anu*). The third month of the Hebrew *sacred* year, and ninth of the *civil* year (Esther 8:9). *See* Calendar; Time. (Ibid)

iii. Elul (**Neh 6:15**)

- a. Elul - (e'lul; Heb. *elûl* from Akkad. *ululu*). The sixth month of the ecclesiastical, and twelfth of the civil, year of the Jews. *See* articles Calendar; Time. (Ibid)

iv. Chisleu (**Neh 1:1; Zec 7:1**)

- a. Chisleu - (kisl-u; Heb. *kislew* from Akkad. *kislimu*) in the KJV, The name of the third civil or ninth ecclesiastical month adopted from the Babylonians after the captivity (Neh. 1:1; Zech. 7:1). *See* Calendar; Time. (Ibid)
- b. Notice in Zec 7:1 that the ninth ecclesiastical month was called by its Babylonian name.

- v. Tebeth (**Est 2:16**)
 - a. Tebeth - (te'beth; Akkad. *?ebetu*, “the month of sinking in,” i.e., wet, muddy month). The tenth month of the second year of the Hebrews (Esther 2:16), corresponding in the main to January. (Ibid)
 - vi. Sebat (**Zec 1:7**)
 - a. Shebat - *See* Sebat. (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - b. Sebat - The fifth month of the Hebrew civil year. *See* Calendar; Time. (Ibid)
 - vii. Adar (**Ezr 6:15; Est 3:7; Est 8:12**)
 - a. Adar - (a'dar; from Akkad. *adaru, addaru*, probably “dark” or “cloudy”). A later name of the twelfth month of the Jewish year borrowed by the Jews from the Babylonian calendar during the Exile. It extended from the new moon of February to that of March (Ezra 6:15; Esther 3:7, 13; 9:15). *See* Time. For the city, *see* Hazaraddar. (Ibid)
 - viii. Tammuz
 - a. Tammuz was also the name of one of the months in the Babylonian calendar which the Jews adopted (see quote from Unger's Bible Dictionary above).
 - b. Tammuz - (tam'uz). The name of the fourth Babylonian month and of an ancient Akkadian deity. *See* Gods, False. (Ibid)
- C. If the Jews adopted and used pagan Babylonian names for the months of their calendar and the Holy Spirit inspired prophets to record it in the scriptures, then it is clearly not a sin to do so.
7. If the prophets and apostles writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit used pagan names for people, places, and calendars, then it is permissible for Christians to call things by pagan names including the days of the week as long as they are not using those names in an act of worship or reverence.

IV. What about **Exo 23:13**?

1. If this means we can't utter the name of a pagan god, then the Holy Spirit is guilty of it (see above).
2. The names of other gods were spoken and written by the prophets numerous times in scripture, such as:
 - A. Adrammelech (**2Ki 17:31**)
 - B. Anammelech (**2Ki 17:31**)
 - C. Ashima (**2Ki 17:30**)
 - D. Ashtoreth (Astarte, Astaroth) (**1Ki 11:5, 33; 2Ki 23:13; Jdg 2:13**)
 - E. Baal (**Jdg 2:13**)
 - F. Baalzebub (**2Ki 1:2**)
 - G. Bel (**Jer 51:44**)
 - H. Chemosh (**Jdg 11:24; 1Ki 11:7; 2Ki 23:13**)
 - I. Chiun (**Amo 5:26**)
 - J. Dagon (**Jdg 16:23**)
 - K. Diana (**Eph 19:24**)

- L. Merodach (**Jer 50:2**)
 - M. Milcom (**1Ki 11:5; 2Ki 23:13**)
 - N. Moloch (**Amo 5:26**)
 - O. Nebo (**Isa 46:1**)
 - P. Nergal (**2Ki 17:30**)
 - Q. Nibhaz (**2Ki 17:31**)
 - R. Nisroch (**2Ki 19:37**)
 - S. Queen of heaven (**Jer 44:19**)
 - T. Rimmon (**2Ki 5:18**)
 - U. Remphan (**Act 7:43**)
 - V. Succothbenoth (**2Ki 17:30**)
 - W. Tammuz (**Eze 8:14**)
 - X. Tartak (**2Ki 17:31**)
3. These 24 references to other gods in the scriptures proves that Exo 23:13 doesn't forbid the uttering of the name of a pagan god, else the prophets and the Holy Spirit Himself is guilty.
- A. Therefore, saying the name of a day of the week that was named after a pagan god is not condemned by Exo 23:13.
 - B. The Bible is full of examples of people, places, and calendrical periods which were named after pagan gods (see above).
4. If Exo 23:13 is not forbidding us from saying the name of a pagan god, then what is it forbidding?
- A. We are not to *make mention* of the names of other gods.
 - i. Mention *n.* - 1. Bearing in mind, consideration. *Obs.* (last usage in 1300) 2. a. In early use, the action of commemorating or calling to mind by speech or writing. Now in more restricted sense, the action, or an act, of incidentally referring to, remarking upon, or introducing the name of (a person or thing) in spoken or written discourse. Orig. in phrase *to make mention of* (= Fr. *faire mention de*), which is now slightly *arch.* or *literary*, exc. in negative contexts.
 - ii. Commemorate *v.* - 1. *trans.* †a. To call to the remembrance of hearers or readers; to make mention of, relate, or rehearse. *Obs.* b. To mention as worthy of remembrance; to make eulogistic or honourable mention of; to celebrate in speech or writing.
 - iii. In other words, we are not to speak of the name of other gods in a way that calls our hearers to a good and worthy remembrance of them.
 - a. This is what Israel did when they spoke endearingly of the queen of heaven and her provision for them (**Jer 44:16-18**).
 - b. This is what Exo 23:13 is condemning.
 - iv. Making mention of someone is speaking well of him (**Gen 40:14; Eph 1:15-16; 1Th 1:2; Phm 1:4**).
 - a. Making mention of a pagan god is speaking well of him.
 - b. This is what Exo 23:13 is condemning.
 - v. Making mention of God's name is worshiping God (**Psa 71:16; Isa 12:4; Isa 63:7**).
 - a. Making mention of a pagan god is worshiping it.

- b. This is what Exo 23:13 is condemning.
 - vi. Making mention of God is speaking in His name (**Jer 20:9**).
 - a. Making mention of a pagan god is speaking in his name.
 - b. This is what Exo 23:13 is condemning.
- B. Taking up the names of other gods in our lips is associated with hastening after them (**Psa 16:4**).
 - i. Israel was not to worship any other god (**Exo 34:14**) which would require mentioning its name.
 - ii. This is the kind of mentioning of a name of a pagan god that the Bible condemns.
- C. Making mention of the name of other gods is associated with swearing by them, serving them, and worshipping them (**Jos 23:7**).
 - i. Simply saying the name of a false god is not what the Bible condemns.
 - ii. It is rather using their names in worship or reverence.
 - iii. Saying a name of a day of week which has a pagan origin is not mentioning the name of a pagan god in reverence or worship.
- D. We must not make mention of other gods in worship or honor of them or by calling upon them for help (**1Ki 18:26**).
- E. The prophets were not to speak in the name of other gods (**Deut 18:20**).
- F. This is what Exo 23:13 is condemning.
- G. We must not *walk* in the name of gods, but in the name of our own God (**Mic 4:5**).
 - i. We must not *love, serve, walk, seek, or worship* pagan gods (**Jer 8:2**).
 - ii. This is what Exo 23:13 is condemning.

V. Many words in the English language have their etymology in Greek and Roman mythology.

1. Many words that we use every day are English equivalents of the names of Greek and Roman gods, such as the following ([source](#)):
 - A. Achilles heel - "used to refer to a small but potentially serious weakness or vulnerable point...The expression comes from the Greek hero *Achilles*, who as a baby was dipped by his mother, the sea god *Thetis*, in the river *Styx* and whose body as a result became invulnerable – except for the heel by which his mother had held him."
 - B. Aphrodisiac - from *Aphrodite*, the Greek goddess of love.
 - C. Cereal - from *Ceres*, the Roman goddess of agriculture and fertility.
 - D. Gigantic - from the Greek word *Gigantikos* who were the 24 Giants in Greek mythology who launched an attack on *Zeus* and the gods of *Olympus* who were defeated with the help of *Heracles*.
 - E. Herculean - from Greek hero *Heracles* (*Hercules*).
 - F. Mentor - from *Mentor*, a figure in Greek mythology who was asked by *Odysseus* to be an advisor and guide to his son while he was off fighting in the Trojan War.
 - G. Nectar - from the Greek word *nektar* which was the drink of the gods which conferred immortality to those who drank it.
 - H. Panic - from the Greek word *panikos* which means "of Pan" who was the god of the fields, woods, shepherds, and flocks who was believed to have the power to strike sudden terror into humans and animals in Greek mythology.

- I. Siren - 2. *Class. Mythol.* One of several fabulous monsters, part woman, part bird, who were supposed to lure sailors to destruction by their enchanting singing. 7. a. An acoustical instrument (invented by Cagniard de la Tour in 1819) for producing musical tones and used in numbering the vibrations in any note. (OED)
 - J. Tantalize - "from *Tantalus*, who in Greek mythology committed certain terrible crimes and was punished for them after his death by being suspended from the bough of a fruit tree over a lake whose waters covered the lower half of his body. He was tormented by hunger and thirst, but when he raised his arm to pick a fruit from the tree, a gust of wind would blow it out of his reach, and when he bent down to drink, the level of the water in the lake would fall."
 - K. Titanic - from the *Titans* who were unruly children and grandchildren of the gods Uranus (the Sky) and Gaia (the Earth) in Greek mythology.
 - L. Venereal - from *Venus* the Roman goddess of love.
2. When we use these words that have come into our language from pagans, we are not worshiping or honoring pagan gods.
 3. The same is the case for the names of the days of the week and months of the year.
 4. Don't make a man an offender for a word (**Isa 29:21**).

VI. Didn't God name the days of the week? Shouldn't we use those names?

1. Moses (who wrote Genesis) numbered the first seven days of creation in his account of it.
 - A. He wrote that "the evening and the morning were the first (second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth) day" (**Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31**).
 - i. These are not proper names of the days of the week.
 - ii. "the first", etc. is an adjectival phrase describing the day it prefaces.
 - iii. "The first day", etc. was the first day of creation; it was not a title.
 - B. God rested on "the seventh day" after creation began (**Gen 2:2-3**).
2. The days of the week were often referred to by their order number in the Bible.
 - A. Phrases such as "the first day", etc. are really more descriptions than names (**Exo 12:15-16**).
 - B. "The first day" is short for "the first day of the week" (**Mat 28:1; Act 20:7; 1Co 16:2**).
 - C. "The first day of the week", or in other words, "the first day" is therefore not really a *name* of that day of the week, but a *description* of it.
3. A person could call Sunday "first day" and Monday "second day", etc., but that is not how the days of the week are called in the Bible.
 - A. Every single place in the entire Bible (with two exceptions) where the words "first day", "second day", "third day", "fourth day", "fifth day", "sixth day", and "seventh day" are used they always are preceded by "the" (i.e. "the first day").
 - i. There are only two exceptions are Neh 9:1 and Neh 6:15 which say "the twenty and fourth day of this month" and "the twenty and fifth day of the month" respectively.
 - ii. Therefore, the days are never called "first day", "second day", etc. in the Bible.
 - B. "First day", "second day", etc. would be considered *names*.

- C. But "the first day", "the second day", etc. which are short for "the first day of the week", "the second day of the week", etc. are *descriptions*, not *names*.
- D. Therefore, God didn't really give *names* to the days of the week, except for the seventh day which was called the sabbath day (more on this below).
- 4. Since God didn't give actual names to the days of the week, we are not *changing* their names by calling them by the customary names of Sunday, Monday, etc.
 - A. We would rather be *giving* them names.
 - B. God permitted His people to give names to, and even change names of, the months of the year (see Section III, 6).
 - C. God even permitted them to use names from the calendar of a pagan country for the months of the year (see Section III, 6).
 - D. God permitted his people to be given names after pagan gods, and God permitted his people to have their names changed to the names of pagan gods (see Section III, 3).
 - E. That being the case, it is therefore not a sin to call the names of the days of the week by their current names which come from the names of pagan gods.
- 5. The seventh day of the week was called the sabbath day in the law of Moses (**Exo 20:8, 11**).
 - A. Sabbath *n.* - 1. a. In the original use: The seventh day of the week (Saturday) considered as the day of religious rest enjoined on the Israelites by the fourth (or in mediæval reckoning the third) commandment of the Decalogue. Phrases, *to keep, break the Sabbath*.
 - B. The word "sabbath" comes from the Hebrew word *shabath* which means "to rest." (OED)
 - C. There were sabbath *days* in the Old Testament (**Col 2:16**).
 - i. These sabbath days didn't always fall on Saturday (the seventh day of the week) (**Joh 19:31**).
 - a. This is evident from the fact that Jesus was crucified the day before the sabbath (**Joh 19:31**) and was in the grave for three days and three nights (**Mat 12:40**).
 - (i) This means that Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday and was resurrected on Saturday evening (count three days and three nights on your fingers if you need to).
 - (ii) Therefore, the sabbath day in **Joh 19:31** was on a Thursday.
 - b. There were numerous sabbath days which did not fall on the seventh day of the week in the law of Moses (**Lev 23:24-39**).
 - c. There was a sabbath day on the following days of the seventh month:
 - (i) The 1st day (**Lev 23:24**).
 - (ii) The 10th day (**Lev 23:27-32**).
 - (iii) The 15th day (**Lev 23:34-35**).
 - (iv) The 22nd day (**Lev 23:39**).
 - ii. In that there were multiple days of the week on which a sabbath was to be kept under the law of Moses, this means that "the sabbath day" could sometimes refer to Thursday (**Joh 19:31**), or other days of the week as well (**Lev 23:24-39**).

- D. The reason that Saturday (the seventh day of the week) or sometimes Thursday (the fifth day of the week) (**Joh 19:31**) were called "the sabbath day" is because a sabbath (day of rest) was kept on those days.
- i. The sabbath law was only ever given to the nation of Israel (**Exo 31:12-17; Deut 5:15**).
 - ii. It was never given to any other nation (**Psa 147:19-20**).
 - iii. The law of Moses which commanded sabbath observance was abolished by Jesus Christ when He died on the cross and thereby instituted the New Testament which replaced it (**2Co 3:6-14; Eph 2:15; Col 2:14-17; Gal 3:19**).
 - iv. The sabbath law was not carried over into the NT.
 - a. It was not among the laws that the apostles determined were binding on Gentile Christians (**Act 15:19-20**).
 - b. There is not one commandment in the NT after the death of Jesus Christ for a Gentile Christian to keep the sabbath.
 - c. The word "sabbath" occurs only ONE TIME in all of the epistles of the New Testament (Romans through Revelation).
 - (i) The only time the sabbath is mentioned in the epistles is in **Col 2:16** when Paul tells the Gentile Christians to not let anyone judge them in respect of the sabbath days because they were taken away when Christ died on the cross and abolished the law of Moses (**Col 2:14-17**).
 - (ii) The epistles (Romans through Revelation) are the apostles' instructions to NT (mainly Gentile) Christians on how they should obey and serve God.
 - (iii) Certainly if Gentile Christians were under the sabbath law, then Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and John would have at least mentioned it once to them!
 - (iv) The sabbath law is not once commanded in the epistles because it was taken away by Jesus Christ who fulfilled it and is our rest (**Heb 4:3-11; Mat 11:28-30**).
 - v. See the series called "The Christian and the Old Testament" for further proof of this: <https://pastorwagner.com/old-testament>.
- E. Therefore, since the sabbath law has been abolished, there is no basis for calling the seventh day of the week "the sabbath day" today.

VII. Why is it wrong to celebrate pagan holidays such as Christmas and Easter, but it's not wrong to use pagan names for the days of the week and months of the year?

1. The issue comes down to whether doing or saying a thing is an act of worship or not.
 2. God commanded His people in both the Old and New Testaments to not worship Him the way that pagan idolaters worshiped their gods (**Deut 12:29-32; Jer 10:2-4; 1Co 10:20-21; 2Co 6:14-18**).
- A. Christmas is a Roman pagan sun worshiping holiday (Natalis Solis Invicti) which the Catholic Church adopted into Catholicism and changed the name of.

- i. The Catholic Church adapted the holiday into "Christianity" by substituting the worship of the rebirth of the sun with the worship of the birth of Christ.
 - ii. See sermon called "Christmas - The Winter Solstice is the Real Reason for the Season": <https://pastorwagner.com/sermons/christmas>.
 - B. Easter is a pagan fertility holiday in honour of the pagan goddess Eostre or Ishtar.
 - i. Easter: “Baeda *Temp. Rat.* xv. derives the word from Eostre, the name of a goddess whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox; her name shows that she was originally the dawn-goddess.” (Etymology of Easter, Oxford English Dictionary)
 - ii. The Catholic Church adopted Eostre into "Christianity" by changing the name to Easter and substituting the worship of the regeneration of nature in the springtime with the worship of the resurrection of Christ.
 - iii. See sermon called "Easter - The Spring Equinox is the Real Reason for the Season": <https://pastorwagner.com/sermons/easter>.
 - C. Incorporating Natalis Solis Invicti and Eostre into the worship of God by changing their names and doing the same religious practices (green trees, gift giving, holly, merry making, eggs, rabbits, sunrise services, etc.) in honour of Jesus Christ is exactly what the Bible forbids in the above cited verses.
- 3. On the other hand, using pagan names for the days of the week or the months of the year is not an act of worship.
- 4. Such is no more an act of worship of pagan gods than is calling Daniel, Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; Azariah, Abednego; Hadassah, Esther; and Apollo, Artemas, Hermas, Hermes, and Zenas by those names which were given to them after the names of pagan gods.