

Thor's Day

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How many of the pagan gods who have days of the week named after them can you name?

Did you ever stop to think about how the days of the week got their names? It is pretty clear that Sun Day, Moon Day, Thor's Day, and Saturn's Day got their names from pagan deities; but what about Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday? They all got their names from more obscure pagan deities, too.

This isn't just a quirk of the English language. It happens in many other languages, too. How much do you know about the names that have been given to the days of the week? Here's a little quiz for you to evaluate your knowledge of the days of the week. Challenge your friends to take it, too.

A thorough list of the names of the days of the week in various languages can be found at <http://www.omniglot.com/language/time/days.htm>, which is the primary source for this article; but you can find this same information in a somewhat more scattered fashion from various places on the Internet. We will just use a few representative languages as examples.

Sunday

Let's start with Sunday, the first day of the week. In many different languages, the first day of the week is named for the Sun. French and Italian are the obvious exceptions, where it has been renamed following the custom of the Roman Catholic Church.

English	Sunday
Latin	diēs solis 'sun day'
French	dimanche 'day of the Lord'
Italian	domenica 'day of the Lord'
Spanish	Sondag 'sun day'
German	Sonntag 'sun day'
Swedish	söndag 'sun day'
Cornish	dy' Sul 'sun day'
Afrikaans	Sondag 'sun day'

Of course, you knew that already, so your score so far is 1 out of 1.

Let's move on to Monday.

Monday

Monday is commonly the lunar day, the Moon day, honoring the Moon (which was worshipped in some pagan cultures).

English	Monday
Latin	diēs lūnae 'moon day'
French	lundi 'moon day'
Italian	lunedì 'moon day'
Spanish	lunes 'moon day'
German	Montag 'moon day'
Swedish	måndag 'moon day'
Cornish	dy' Lun 'moon day'
Afrikaans	Maandag 'moon day'

Since you probably know at least a little bit of Spanish, French, or German, and you certainly know English, you must have gotten that one right. Now you are 2 for 2. Don't get too cocky; it is about to get harder.

Tuesday

In several languages, Tuesday is named after Mars, or a lesser known Germanic/Norse god named Tiw.

English	Tuesday
Latin	diēs martis 'Mars day'
French	mardi 'Mars day'
Italian	martedì 'Mars day'
Spanish	martes 'Mars day'
German	Dienstag 'Thing(sus) day' (a god identified with Mars)
Swedish	tisdag 'thing day'
Cornish	dy' Meurth 'Mars day'
Afrikaans	Dinsdag 'thing day'

The Latin languages (French, Italian, and Spanish) all named the third day of the week after Mars. Most Americans are familiar enough with Roman mythology to know Mars was the Roman god of war.

All I know about Tiw (sometimes called Mars Thingsus) I learned from Wikipedia.

“**Týr** is a Germanic god associated with law and heroic glory in Norse mythology, portrayed as one-handed. Corresponding names in other Germanic languages are Gothic **Teiws**, Old English **Tiw** and Old High German **Ziu** and **Cyo**, all from Proto-Germanic ***Tiwaz**. The Latinised name is rendered as **Tius** or **Tio** and also formally as **Mars Thincsus**.

“*Tiw* was equated with Mars in the *interpretatio germanica*. Tuesday is “*Tiw's Day*” (also in Alemannic *Zischtig* from *zīes tag*), translating dies Martis.

“The name of Mars Thingsus (*Thincsus*) is found in an inscription on a 3rd-century altar from the Roman fort and settlement of Vercovicium at Housesteads in Northumberland, thought to have been erected by Frisian mercenaries stationed at Hadrian's Wall. It is interpreted as ‘Mars of the Thing’”¹

Wednesday

The fourth day of the week is dedicated to Mercury (the speedy Roman messenger of the gods) in Latin languages, or the Norse god Odin (called Woden in Old English) in northern European languages, except German. Uniquely, the Germans honor Hump Day by recognizing it is the middle of the work week.

English	Wednesday
Latin	diēs mercurī 'Mercury day'
French	mercredi 'Mercury day'
Italian	mercoledì 'Mercury day'
Spanish	miércoles 'Mercury day'
German	Mittwoch 'midweek'
Swedish	onsdag 'Odin's day'
Cornish	dy' Mergher 'Mercury day'
Afrikaans	Woensdag 'Wodin's day'

Thursday

Jove (a.k.a. Jupiter) and Thor are fighting over the honor of having Thursday named after them.

English	Thursday
Latin	diēs iovis 'Jove (Jupiter) day'
French	jeudi 'Jupiter day'
Italian	giovedì 'Jove (Jupiter) day'
Spanish	jueves 'Jupiter day'
German	Donnerstag 'thunder (Thor's) day'
Swedish	torsdag 'Thor's day'
Cornish	dy' Yow 'Jupiter day'
Afrikaans	Donderdag 'Thor's day'

The Latin languages favor Jove, also known as Jupiter. The Norse languages honor Thor. Thor had a hammer, and wasn't afraid to use it, just like Jupiter used lightning bolts to get things done his way.

How many of the days of the week have you gotten right so far?

Let's lovingly move on to Friday. (That was a hint.) Do you know who Friday was named for, without peeking on the next page?

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BDr>

Friday

Two goddesses of love and sexuality, Venus and Frige, both lay claims to Friday in various languages.

English	Friday
Latin	diēs veneris 'Venus day'
French	vendredi 'Venus day'
Italian	venerdì 'Venus day'
Spanish	viernes 'Venus day'
German	Freitag 'Frige's day'
Swedish	fredag 'Frige's day'
Cornish	dy' Gwener 'Venus day'
Afrikaans	Vrydag 'Frige's day'

I'll bet you didn't know that one. Kudos to you if you did.

Saturday

Last, and certainly not least, we come to the seventh day of the week. The Roman god Saturn is honored in English and some other languages; but many languages call Saturday the Sabbath, or (in a few cases) the Lord's Day.

English	Saturday
Latin	diēs saturnī 'Saturn day'
French	samedi 'day of the Sabbath'
Italian	sabato 'Sabbath day'
Spanish	sábado 'Sabbath day'
German	Samstag 'Saturn day'
Swedish	lördag 'Lord's day'
Cornish	dy' Sadorn 'Saturn day'
Afrikaans	Saterdag 'Saturn's day'

Not only that, Saturday is called Σάββατο (Sabbato) in Greek; Sobota, in Czech, Polish, Slovenian, and Slovak; Sabtu in Indonesian and Subota in Croatian. It is Сѣбота (S'bow-ta) in Bulgarian, Субота (Sue-bow-ta) in Ukrainian and Serbian, and Суботы (Sue-bow-tue) in Russian. In those 15 languages, it is pretty clear which day is the Sabbath of the Lord. And, as shown in the chart above, Saturday is the Lord's Day in Swedish (and in Danish as well).

Biblical Languages

During all this discussion, we haven't once mentioned Hebrew. Do you know the names of the week in Hebrew? Well, here they are:

יום ראשון First Day	יום שני Second Day	יום שלישי Third Day	יום רביעי Fourth Day	יום חמישי Fifth Day	יום שישי Sixth Day	יום שבת Seventh Day
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Everybody knows Jesus rose on Sunday—but the Bible doesn't actually say that. To be precise, the King James Version says,

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. [Matthew 28:1]

And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. [Mark 16:2]

Seven verses later Mark says,

And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. [Mark 16:9]

Luke says,

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. [Luke 24:1]

John says,

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. [John 20:1]

None of the four Gospel writers say Jesus rose on Sunday. They all say he rose on “the first day of the week.” That’s because “First Day” is the Hebrew name for Sunday. Christians all know that when the Bible says, “first day” it means Sunday. Jesus rose on Sunday morning, the day after the Sabbath day, as Matthew says.

Some might argue that the King James translators should have written that Jesus rose on Sunday, instead of the first day of the week, to avoid confusion—but there really is no confusion about that. When the Bible says, “first day” it really means, “Sunday.” So, the King James translators could just as well have written,

Sunday cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. [John 20:1]

The King James translation says,

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. [Genesis 1:5]

In other words, light was divided from darkness on Sunday. Reading the rest of Genesis chapter 1, translating the Hebrew names of the days of the week into English names, you see He made the sky on Monday; dry land, the seas, and vegetation on Tuesday; the sun, moon, and stars on Wednesday; birds and sea creatures on Thursday; land animals and Adam on Friday; and rested on Saturday.

If the King James translators had translated the Hebrew day names into the English day names (instead of day numbers) in Genesis, it would have read,

And on Saturday God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on Saturday from all his work which he had made. And God blessed Saturday, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. [Genesis 2:2-3]

If the King James translators had translated the Hebrew day name as the English day name in the Ten Commandments, they would have written,

But Saturday is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested Saturday: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. [Exodus 20:10-11]

Church Latin

At the beginning of this essay, we told you the (Classical) Latin names for the days of the week. Church Latin is slightly different from Classical Latin. In the early Roman Catholic Church writings, all of which were written in Latin, they did not want to use day names that glorified Saturn, Venus, and other pagan deities. Here's how the days of the week are referred to in the Roman Catholic Latin translation of the Bible (the Vulgate) and other Latin writings:

deis dominica Day of the Lord	secunda feria Second Festival	tertia feria Third Festival	quarta feria Fourth Festival	quinta feria Fifth Festival	sexta feria Sixth Festival	sabbatum Sabbath
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Most of the Church Latin day names are numbers, followed by “feria,” which is generally translated as “festival” or “holiday.” Since “holiday” is really a shortened version of “holy day,” I think the Church Fathers were intending to convey the idea that the days of the week were holy because God created the days of the week—but that’s just my opinion. Certainly, unlike months and years, which have astronomical reasons, the days of the week seem to have been arbitrarily created by God.

The Church Latin day names make it clear that Saturday is the Sabbath of the Lord.

What about Arabic? It is much like Hebrew and Church Latin, as seen in the chart on the next page. The chart comes from a source much more familiar with Arabic than I am. (I don't know any Arabic at all, so I have to take their word for it.)

1) **Sunday** د-ح-ألا /Al-Ahad/:

Arabs named it as “**Awwal** أوّل” which translates as “First” and is derived from number “**One** واحد” and means “**The One** د-ح-ألا” which is also one of the 99 attributes of Allah (God).

2) **Monday** ن-ي-ن-ث-إلا /Al-Ithnayn/:

Literally means “**Two** ن-ي-ن-ثا” and is derived from number two and refers to the second day of the week. Arabs used to name it as “**Ahwan** ن-و-هأ”.

3) **Tuesday** الث-ل-ث-ألا /Al-Thulathaa/:

It refers to the third day of the week and is derived from number “**Three** ث-ث-ال-ث” in Arabic. Arabs used to name it as “**Jubar** ج-ب-ج”.

4) **Wednesday** ء-ع-ب-ر-ألا /Al-Arbo’aa/:

It refers to the fourth day of the week and is derived from number “**Four** ء-ع-ب-رأ”.

5) **Thursday** س-ي-م-خ-لا /Al-Khamees/:

It refers to the fifth day of the week and is derived from number “**Five** م-خ-س”.

6) **Friday** الج-م-ع-ة /Al-Jum’ah/:

The Arabic name means “gathering or assembly” and is derived from the Arabic root verb “**to gather** ج-ع-م”. It is known that Friday is the weekend holiday all over the Arab world and Muslims gather on this day for a congregation prayer and family visits. The Arabic name for Friday (Jum’ah) can also refer to the whole week in some Arabic contexts. Friday or Al-Jum’ah was mentioned once in the Holy Qur’an and there is a whole chapter or Surah named Al-Jum’ah. Arabs used to name the day as “**Aroubah** ع-ر-و-ب-ة”.

7) **Saturday** ت-ب-س-لا /Al-Sabt/:

The name is derived from the root verb “**to rest or hibernate** ت-ب-س”. The name and its derivative verb were mentioned six times in the Holy Qur’an. Saturday is also a weekend holiday in some Arab countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Al-Sabt is almost identical with the Hebrew words Shabbat and Sabbath. Arabs used to name it as “**Shabar** ش-ب-س”.

<https://blogs.transparent.com/arabic/where-do-the-arabic-names-of-weekdays-come-from/>

Sabbath

Since it is clear from so many modern languages, plus ancient Church Latin, that Saturday is the Sabbath, why do most Christian churches violate the Sabbath Commandment by worshipping on Sunday and ignoring the sacredness of Saturday? Most people would say, “to honor the resurrection of Christ” or “Jesus changed the day;” but that isn’t the historical reason. The historical reason is a combination of paganism and anti-Semitism.

Emperor Constantine’s Sunday Law says,

On the Venerable Day of the Sun [*“venerabili die Solis”*--the sacred day of the Sun] let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. [*The First Sunday Law of Constantine, March 7, 321 A.D, in “Codex Justinianus,” lib. 3, tit. 12, 3; trans. in Phillip Schaff “History of the Christian Church,” Vol. 3, p. 380*]

Constantine made Sunday the official day of worship in honor of the Sun, not in honor of the Son of God.

Forty-six years later, the Catholic Council of Laodicea ratified the change of the day of worship for obviously anti-Semitic reasons.

“Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ.” [Canon XXIX]

Sunday worship began in the Roman Catholic Church about 1700 years ago. When the Protestant Reformation began 500 years ago, why didn't the Protestants obey God rather than man, and replace the 1200 year-old human tradition of Sunday worship with a return to Sabbath worship as commanded by God? Sadly, anti-Semitism was as strong in Germany in 1543 as it was in 1943. Hitler used Martin Luther's work urging German princes to kill Jews and take their property as justification for the holocaust. [See “On the Jews and Their Lies,” Part XI, by Martin Luther, written in 1543, <https://christogenea.org/references/jews-and-their-lies-part-xi>]

We don't honor Thor by calling the fifth day of the week, Thursday. It's just a harmless custom that started hundreds of years ago. Most people don't even know that Thursday was named for Thor.

Most people don't know the anti-Semitic origin of Sunday worship. They don't worship on Sunday to prove they hate Jews. They have the best intentions. But they say, “The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.” God specifically commands us to keep the Seventh Day holy. That is, from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday is the time He commands us to keep holy for Him. Jesus said,

If ye love me, keep my commandments. [John 14:15]

How can we explain to Jesus that we love Him, but choose to disobey one of His commandments every week just for the sake of a human tradition based on hatred of the Jews?

Jesus said,

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 5:19]

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. [Matthew 19:17]

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. [John 14:21]

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. [John 15:10]

Test Results

In the beginning of this article, I asked you if you know how the days of the week got their names. How many days of the week did you get right?

On Judgment Day, Jesus will ask you if you loved Him enough to keep His commandment to keep His Sabbath holy. (Actually, He won't have to ask because He will know what you did.) When He comes, will you be keeping His Sabbath from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday, or will you be keeping the pagan, anti-Semitic, Sun Day? Do you love Him enough to keep His commandments, abide in His love, and enter into life?