

Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT
FOR THE MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

THE LORD'S DAY

John, the beloved disciple, was banished on the Isle of Patmos when he wrote, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet" (Revelation 1:10). The Revelation was given to John on this wonderful occasion. The "Lord's day" specifically referred to the first day of the week, or Sunday.

Saturday, the last day of the week, had special significance to the Jews who lived under the Old Law and were bound by commandment to keep the Sabbath as a sacred day of rest and worship. After the coming of Jesus Christ, Christians no longer lived under the law nor were subject to its mandates. The early Christians made a new tradition of gathering for worship on the first day of the week and referred to it as the "Lord's Day".

Sunday also had special significance to the believers as it was on the first day of the week after His crucifixion the Lord Jesus was resurrected from the grave. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre.... And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus" (Luke 24:1-3).

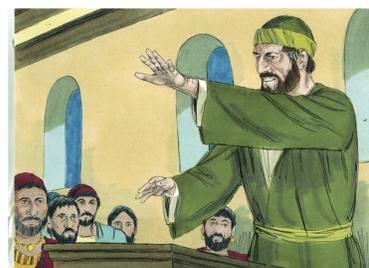
Sunday gained even more importance as a special day because the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Christian believers on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) which occurred on the first day of the week. The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, was an agricultural celebration that

according to Jewish tradition also commemorated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. It was celebrated fifty days after the Passover. In a beautiful parallel, Christ was crucified for the sins of mankind during the Passover. Subsequently, on Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended and wrote the divine law of God in the hearts of the believers.

For these reasons, it is very understandable why the followers of Christ began to worship on Sunday instead of Saturday. They were not bound to keep the Sabbath and the first day of the week had much more meaning and significance to them.

Scripturally, the early morning church is found worshipping on Sunday. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). Paul instructed the saints in I Corinthians 16:1-2, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Their offerings were gathered on Sunday as opposed to the old Sabbath day and there was a clear pattern of the saints meeting and worshipping on Sunday.

(Continued on page 2)



"Sunday had special significance to the believers as it was on the first day of the week that the Lord Jesus was resurrected from the grave..."

Editorial

3

Bible Study:
The Sabbath

4

Companion Article:
The Sabbath

5

Q & A
Mosaic Sabbath vs.
Christian Sabbath

7

Did You Know?

A Word in Season

8

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

(Continued from page 1)

Since the time of Christ, there has been a tradition in the Christian world to set aside Sunday, the Lord's Day, as a special time of collective worship. While there is no command in the scripture for this, as there was for keeping the Sabbath in the Old Testament, the scripture does teach not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25).

Nothing is wrong with meeting to worship on days other than Sunday, but there is something clearly wrong with congregations who meet on Saturday as a form of Sabbath keeping. They are holding to a law that is passed away and there is no righteousness in the day itself. In seeking to keep an outward form of the law, they miss the greater truth of the freedom and true righteousness in Jesus Christ.

While some Christians may meet on other days out of expediency to the laws of the land or according to a different work week, as in some Muslim countries, all can experience the beauty and liberty of the Lord's Day every day of the week.

—mws

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

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Editorial



There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. —Hebrews 4:9-10

The soul rest that is available in Jesus is nothing less than glorious. Through Jesus Christ, there is a peace that passeth all understanding. It defies the troubles and storms of life and is deep and steadfast in the

heart of the child of God. It comes not from our own works or righteousness but from the very presence of the Son of God.

This quarter we continue to build upon the foundation that was laid in Issue 18 concerning the two covenants that God established with mankind. Keeping the Sabbath day holy was one of the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament. That was one of the few commandments which was not reinstated in the New Testament. It was a ceremonial, physical observance of a statute that laid the foundation for the blessings of the true Sabbath rest to come in Jesus Christ.

There are many people around the world who cling to the law of the Sabbath. They believe that worshipping on Saturday is required by God. The unfortunate reality is that they miss the essence of the true Sabbath. Many religious groups sin and live in disobedience to God's Word, but they find security in keeping the Sabbath. We are no longer under the Old Testament dispensation and we have a greater standard of holiness and rest than what was ever given by physically resting and worshipping on the Sabbath.

An important lesson can be gained as we consider those who still today keep the Sabbath. There is great inconsistency in Seventh Day groups who purport to be keeping the law of God. Not only does the Old Testament teach the offering of sacrifices and the burning of incense, it teaches to keep many feast days holy to the Lord. Where is the consistency? With respect to the Sabbath, the Old Testament teaches that the children of Israel were not to leave their "place" on the Sabbath. It declares a penalty of death to all who labored on the Sabbath. Are Seventh Day believers still practicing these things? This is the reason it is vital that we not pick and choose what we will teach from the Old Testament. While we learn much from the Old Covenant, we have a better and more satisfying spiritual experience under the New Covenant.

While we have freedom of labor and freedom of worship in this dispensation, the enemy has taken advantage. Too many people right among the saints are getting so busy they fail to make collective worship with God's people a priority. Service attendance becomes "hit and miss" depending on the labor of the day. It is very important that we not neglect the practical lessons of rest and worship that were taught in the Old Testament.

More importantly, may we ever strive to enter into the genuine soul rest that is only available in Christ as we seek to humble ourselves and find security in the righteousness of God.

Michael W. Smith

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Bible Study Guide: The Sabbath

Scripture Reading: *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. —Colossians 2:16-17*

Summary: Sabbath keeping was required under the Old Covenant. This ceremonial observance of keeping one day reserved and holy for God was fulfilled in the New Testament through Christ. Jesus gives true soul rest and the child of God is to keep every day holy unto the Lord.

I. Institution of the Mosaic Sabbath

- A. Exodus 16:22-30 First observed.
- B. Exodus 20:8-11 Law given on Mount Sinai.

II. Sabbath Not Observed Until Moses

- A. Nehemiah 9:14 Made known by Moses.
- B. Deuteronomy 5:15 Commanded after deliverance from Egypt.

III. Reasons for the Sabbath

- A. Exodus 23:12 Rest.
- B. Exodus 20:11 Remember the Creator/creation.
- C. Deuteronomy 5:12-15 Remember the deliverance from Egypt.
- D. Leviticus 23:3-8; (19:30) Time of worship.

IV. Penal Law of the Sabbath

- A. Exodus 31:12-17 (35:2-3) Death to anyone who worked.
- B. Numbers 15:32-36 Man stoned who picked up sticks.
- C. Nehemiah 13:17-19 Judah profanes the Sabbath.

V. Law was a Covenant to the Jewish People

- A. Exodus 31:17 Sign between God and the children of Israel.

VI. The Old Covenant Law No Longer in Force

(see Issue 18)

- A. Hebrews 8:8-9, 13 Mosaic Law no longer in effect (Jeremiah 31:31-32).
- B. Luke 16:16 The Law was until John the Baptist.
- C. Galatians 3:11-13 No man justified by the law.
- D. Romans 6:14 Not under the law (Romans 7:6).
- E. Acts 15:5, 24, 28-29 Keeping the law of Moses not commanded.

VII. Jesus and the Sabbath

- A. Matthew 12:1-8 Jesus justifies picking corn to eat.
- B. Mark 2:27 Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.
- C. Matthew 12:9-14 It is lawful to do good deeds on the Sabbath. (John 5:8, 9)

VIII. The Christian Sabbath

- A. Hebrews 10:1 Law was a shadow of good things to come.

- B. Matthew 5:17 Jesus fulfilled the law.
- C. Isaiah 11:10 Glorious rest prophesied.
- D. Hebrews 4:1-11 True sabbath rest through Christ.
- E. Matthew 11:28 Jesus is the giver of spiritual rest.
- F. Colossians 2:16-17 No man is to judge based on holy or sabbath days.
- G. Luke 1:74-75 Every day holy.

IX. The Lord's Day: Historical Day of Christian Worship

- A. Revelation 1:10 The Lord's Day.
- B. Luke 24:1 (Matthew 28:1) Christ's resurrection was on the first day of the week.
- C. Acts 2:1 Day of Pentecost was on Sunday.
- D. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (Acts 20:7) Followers of Christ worshipped on Sunday.

Conclusion: *But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.*

—Galatians 4:9-10

4 WAYS IN WHICH POSITIVE LAWS MAY CEASE TO OBLIGE

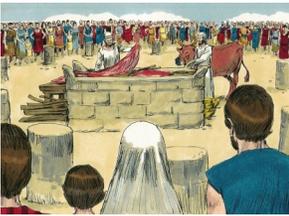
(From Adam Clarke's commentary)

1. By the natural law of necessity.
2. By a particular law, which is superior.
3. By the law of charity and mercy.
4. By the dispensation and authority of the lawgiver.

*These cases are all exemplified in
Matthew 12:4-8.*

The Sabbath

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). The fourth commandment was instituted by God when He gave the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. It set apart Saturday, the last day of the week, as a sacred day of worship under the Old Testament. God’s people were to work six days but the seventh day was ordained of God to be a day of rest with no work or labor.



“While God rested on the seventh day after creation... it was not sanctified until a much later date.”

Origin of the Sabbath

The first recorded observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest was when God sent manna to feed the children of Israel in the wilderness after they had fled Egypt. The people gathered twice as much bread on Friday, for God did not send the manna on Saturday, as it was “the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord” (Exodus 16:22-30). This observance was quickly solidified by God’s covenant of the Ten Commandments where He blessed and hallowed the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:11).

Not Observed Before Moses

There is no record or history of the godly patriarchs observing the Sabbath prior to the Mosaic law. There were 2500 years of history before Moses where there is no distinct evidence of the Sabbath as a formal ordinance being regarded. Noah and Abraham walked by faith and found grace in God’s eyes without keeping Saturday as a holy day. While God rested on the seventh day after creation (Genesis 2:3), it was not sanctified until a much later date. The holy Sabbath was made known to the children of Israel “by the hand of Moses” (Nehemiah 9:14) and was commanded after the children of Israel were delivered from the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

Purpose of the Sabbath

The Sabbath, or intermission, was a day God instituted under the Old Covenant for multiple reasons and purposes. It was to be a day of rest and recuperation for both man and animal. “Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be

refreshed” (Exodus 23:12). It was a day to especially remember the Creator of the earth (Exodus 20:11); it was also a memorial for the children of Israel to “remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out...” (Deuteronomy 5:15). The Sabbath was a special appointed time to worship in the sanctuary. On this day without work, there was to be a “holy convocation” or assembly, for worship to the Lord (Leviticus 23:3-8).

Penal Law

The keeping of the Sabbath by the Jews was not just a suggestion by God but a plain and positive commandment; hence, the penal law of the Sabbath was severe. It was to be kept holy and “every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death....whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 31:14-15). In part, this harsh sentence was pronounced by God because the Israelites were to build the tabernacle. He did not want them getting so busy working on it that they failed to keep the Sabbath. The children of Israel were also forbidden to kindle fire for the purpose of doing work and cooking (Exodus 35:2-3). It was understood by the Jews that they could maintain fire for light and heat.

While in the wilderness, the children of Israel found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath. The man was brought to Moses and Aaron. The Lord told Moses that the man should be stoned to death outside of the camp, and so it was (Numbers 15:32-36). His sin was not in ignorance but was a clear, known transgression of God’s law. Behold the severity of God.

The Sabbath Profaned

In later years, the nobles of Judah profaned the Sabbath day. The gates to Jerusalem were left open for travel and commerce (Nehemiah 13:17-19). Nehemiah had the gates shut in an attempt to stop commerce on the Sabbath. The merchants set up booths outside the walls of the city until the governor stopped it in an effort to once more sanctify the Sabbath day. When people stopped keeping the Sabbath, they stopped worshipping

(Continued from page 5)

God and evil abounded. Work for worldly gain was clearly prohibited on this sacred day in the law dispensation. The spirit of the Sabbath was not to be one of bondage but one of joy, refreshment, mercy, remembrance, and worship.

Belonged to the Old Covenant

The law of the Sabbath was in effect until that covenant was replaced with a new and living way. As prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-32 and reiterated in Hebrews 8:8-9, 13: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers.... A new covenant, he that made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

Christ Brought Soul Rest

With the coming of Jesus Christ, the Old Covenant law was no longer in effect. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). No longer were people under the bondage of the law but were in freedom of the spirit, "For ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Under the Old Covenant, the Jews were justified through fleshly rituals and observances. In the New Covenant dispensation, justification is through grace by faith in Jesus Christ. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.... But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God.... Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:10-13). Sabbath keeping was not reinstated in the New Testament (Acts 15:5, 24-29) and God's children live free from that bondage.

Sabbath Not Reiterated by Christ

In all of Christ's teaching, He never reiterated the law of the Sabbath, even when He reinstated some of the other commandments (Mark 10:19). He Himself was accused by the Pharisees when He allowed His disciples to pick corn and eat (Matthew 12:1). Jesus healed on the Sabbath and justified doing good things on that day (Matthew 12:9-14). He instructed a sick man to take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath (John 5:8-11). Jesus addressed these issues by saying: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Christ, as the mediator and Son of God, had the authority to alter and change the observances of that day.

Clinging to the Old Law

Many people are holding the doctrine of Sabbath keeping sacred still today. The scripture clearly teaches that God's people are not under that law. "After that ye have known God...how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times and years" (Galatians 4:9-10). The Word of God further teaches that no man is to judge in "meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:16-17).

Christ Is Our Sabbath

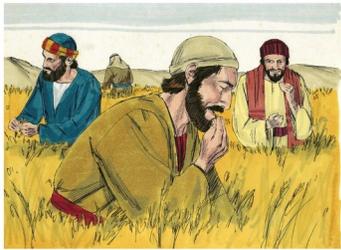
Sabbath keeping was not a moral issue but an issue of observance. In the New Testament, the sacrifices, rituals, incense, temple worship, etc. are passed away and fulfilled through Jesus Christ. The keeping of the literal Sabbath as a holy day of rest was a type of the marvelous, spiritual rest that is found in Jesus Christ. Christ is our Sabbath and His rest far surpasses the fleshly day of worship of one day a week. Hebrews 4:1-11 wonderfully shares the truth of the true rest to God's people who cease from their own fleshly endeavors to be justified before God and enter into God's rest through faith. The literal Sabbath keeping was a shadow of the glorious, perpetual, spiritual rest in the dispensation of grace; hence, the invitation of Christ to all people: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

True Sabbath Rest of the Soul

The physical observance of a holy day to worship God gave way to the ability and power through Christ to live holy every day. "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74-75).

The true Christian Sabbath in the New Testament dispensation is one of peace, rest, spiritual worship, and holy living every day of the week. Every day is sacred and reserved for devotion and remembrance of the deliverance from sin through Jesus Christ. Thank God for this wonderful Sabbath experience!

—mws



"Christ is our Sabbath and His rest far surpasses the fleshly day of worship one day a week."



Why does the scripture say that the Sabbath is to be observed for all generations?

Exodus 31:16-17 reads, “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever....”

The law of the Sabbath was a sign between God and the Jewish nation. It was confined to them and was a national statue. It was to be lasting just as circumcision, the weekly showbread, the Levitical priesthood, etc. Forever does not mean eternal in this sense. The Sabbath law, as other Old Testament ceremonies, was to be observed as the standing law and statute until such a time as a new law took its place. The type was to continue in force until the antitype came. The Sabbath was fulfilled in Christ who is now our eternal, continuing Sabbath rest. The law that separated Jews from Gentiles was done away by the cross of Christ (Ephesians 2:11-18).

Is it wrong to work on Sunday?

We are no longer under the Sabbath law where it was clearly forbidden to do any kind of work. While Christians traditionally worship on Sunday, the dictates of the law of the Sabbath did not carry over to Sunday under the New Covenant.

With that said, let us remember that “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Galatians 3:24-25). While we are no longer under the schoolmaster, it is foolhardy to forget the lessons while under the law. Part of the reason for the Sabbath was to give man and animal a day of rest to begin the work week refreshed in body and spirit. While not an imperative for Sunday, there is still a practical principle that is important. Rest is needful and

people operate better on many levels when they have a day free from work to focus on worship and family.

People are too often using their “liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Galatians 5:13) and Sunday becomes like any other day. People are overworked and too occupied with the affairs of life. Sunday worship becomes something to hurry and get finished so people can leave and go work.

Saints of God must set aside time to worship with other believers and not allow the busyness of life to infringe on more important things. While we are not Sabbath keepers and should not be under bondage to that law, there is wisdom and spiritual benefit to keeping our special worship day free from a lot of outside activity on a general basis.

—mws

Mosaic Sabbath *vs.* Christian Sabbath

Ceremonial	Spiritual
Rest to the body	Rest to the soul
Seventh day to be kept holy	Every day to be kept holy
Manual labor made a day unholy	Labor or lack thereof does not make a day holy or unholy
Abstain from manual labor	Cease from all sinful works
Laboring on the Sabbath brought penalty of death	Committing sin breaks the soul rest and brings spiritual death
Temporal blessing	Spiritual blessing
Type and Shadow	Fulfillment



DID YOU KNOW?

Quotes from Second Century Christians

The new law requires you to keep a perpetual Sabbath. However, you, because you are idle for one day, suppose you are godly.... —Justin Martyr, 160 AD

All those righteous men already mentioned [Adam, Abel, Enoch, Lot, Melchizedek], though they kept no Sabbaths, were pleasing to God.

—Justin Martyr, 160 AD

Just as the abolition of the fleshly circumcision and of the old Law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specific times, so also the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary. —Tertullian, 197 AD



A Word
In Season

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Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. —John 15:4

Meaningful ministry takes time and sacrifice. It can drain the body physically and emotionally. After years of ministry, any intelligent, capable person can expound on the scripture and maintain at least a facade of sincerity. While others may still be edified, the deep spark of anointing and fire may be missing and ministry can become a sterile, static job to fulfill.

Effective ministry comes not from natural ability alone but from the fruit that grows from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus instructed His disciples to “Abide in Me”—dwell with me, live with me, walk with me. In other words, stay connected to me.



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

It is needful and vital for ministers of the Lord and all of God’s people to be careful in the business of ministering to others and fulfilling the great commission to not neglect the personal connection with Christ. The enemy uses the lawful and even good things of this life to interfere with the communication and oneness with the Spirit to weaken people’s connection with God.

When the pressures and weariness of ministry settle on the physical body, draw nigh to God. Spend time seeking the Lord personally and connecting with Him for yourself. When your cup is full, you are then able to minister to others with power and anointing because of the personal connection with Christ.

—mws