

# SABBATH KEEPING

Extreme confusion and deceived over-confidence generally prevail concerning the sabbath question. Some call Sunday the sabbath, others, Saturday. Since the Bible speaks very plainly on the subject let us see "what saith the Scriptures?"

The first recorded religious day to be observed by man was given to **Israel**, in Exod. 12:6. It was the fourteenth day of the Jewish first month called "Passover day," in commemoration of the angel of death passing over the Israelites in Egypt when all the first born Egyptian children died. The next recorded religious day observance is found in Exod. 16:23: "Tomorrow is the rest of the **holy sabbath** (meaning intermission, or rest) unto the Lord." Please note that the word "tomorrow" here referred to the seventh day that Israel first received the **manna** from heaven (v. 12, 27-29) and according to the context, had no connection whatsoever with specific **calendar week days**, which are not mentioned. **Every seventh day thereafter** was to be for Israel a holy day of rest—the sabbath, regardless of calendar week days. Israel had also other sabbaths. Compare John 19:31, "That **sabbath** was an **high day**," i.e., it was the passover, which was a sabbath as well as the **first** and **last** days of the following seven days of eating unleavened bread. Christ was crucified **on Wednesday** and not **traditional Friday**. His body was to be three full days in the tomb—actually three sabbath days in succession—passover, first day of unleavened bread and the weekly sabbath. Lev. 23:4-8; Matt. 12:40; 28:1; Luke 23:55, 56; 24:1 proves this conclusively. "In the end of the sabbaths," is the original of Matt. 28:1.

According to the record, not until the ten commandments were given to Israel did God make mention of His memorial sabbath, when He rested after six days work of creation. He called both it and Israel's rest day "the sabbath of the Lord thy God." Israel's seventh day of rest was not given them to commemorate God's work of creation or even the giving of the manna. This can be seen from Deut. 5:12-15,—"**and remember** that thou wast a servant in **Egypt** and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; **therefore** the Lord thy God commanded **thee** to keep the sabbath day." The sabbath was for Israel also "**a sign** between God and them that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify (set apart) them" (Exod. 31:17; Ezek. 20:12, 20). To say that sabbath observance was commanded men prior to Moses' day has no scriptural support whatever. Neh. 9:14 informs us that God

“made known to them (Israel) thy holy sabbath and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws by the hand of thy servant Moses.” This, the only ceremonial law in the ten commandments, was “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb. 10:1), namely, the believer’s resting in the saving, finished work of Jesus Christ and also the coming millennial “rest of the whole earth” (Isa. 14:7).

Is the term “Christian sabbath” scriptural? It is argued that Paul kept the sabbath. Yes, and “many thousands of Jews” which believed were “all zealous of the law” during the book of Acts period (Acts 21:20), for God had not yet revealed that Mosaic law, as far as this present parenthetical Church dispensation is concerned, was to be “abolished.” This was revealed some thirty years after the cross through the apostle Paul (Eph. 2:14; Col. 2:14-16; Heb. 8:7-9, 14—all written about A. D. 63. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come; but the Body (Church) is of Christ” (Col. 2:16, 17). That Mosaic law and the sabbath will again be observed during the coming millenium (thousand year reign of Christ on earth) can be deduced from Isa. 2:3; 66:23; Mic. 4:2; Zech. 14:16-21.

The fact that Paul, “the minister of Jesus Christ to the gentiles” (Rom. 15:16; 11:13; 1 Tim. 2:7), re-iterated in his epistles all the ten commandments in over 120 commands and admonitions, but left out altogether the fourth, about the sabbath, is unanswerable for the sabbatarians. Another indisputable fact they cannot face is that in Acts 15:1-29 it was made quite plain to the early church that no Mosaic law was to be imposed on gentile believers. Acts 21:25 states: “As touching the gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing.”

It is argued that the Pope changed the Jewish Saturday sabbath to Sunday at the council of Laodicea in 336. To the Christian, what matters this, or the Catholic decision in 393 as to what writings should make up the Bible, when, as Catholics themselves admit, the holy, inspired Word of God had already existed over three hundred years in the Church (before Roman Catholicism began) as being entirely sufficient for Christian faith and practice, without need of so-called “infallible” interpreters and canonizers? Any unbiased reader of the book of Acts can see that Jews convened in synagogues on the Jewish sabbath day and that Christians generally met together on the first day of the week without direct command from God. We read in Rom. 14:5, “One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

Other arguments of sabbatarians are:

(1) “The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27). True. It was beneficial physically and spiritually. Although written about Israel “for our learning” (Rom. 15:4), we find one day’s rest in seven likewise beneficial for us, but we are not divinely commanded to rest. “For ye, brethren, have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty as an occasion for the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:13, 14, 18). See also Rom. 13:8-10.

(2) Christ 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; but whosoever shall do and teach them the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:19). But these same people who love to quote this verse for sabbath keeping, teach that whosoever does not keep the ten commandments, especially the Saturday sabbath, will be lost forever and will therefore not be “in the kingdom of heaven” at all!

(3) They argue that the coming “Beast” or world dictator “will think to change times and laws,” according to Dan. 7:25, and therefore the keeping of Sunday is “the mark of the beast” referred to in Rev. 13:16, 17. This is truly far fetched and unscriptural for it is nowhere revealed just what the “mark” will be. What about the millions who observed Sunday before Mrs. E. G. White, founder of Seventh Day Adventism, had her visions (see Col. 1:25; 2:18) concerning the sabbath? Must we believe they are forever doomed because they observed Sunday? Adventists teach that those who had not “the light” on keeping the sabbath will not be judged for keeping Sunday. God’s Word teaches that the “light of the gospel” of the grace of God only determines one’s salvation—not light concerning works, as sabbath keeping, etc. Beware of all who teach “another gospel” of grace plus works!

The first half of the fourth commandment is almost universally overlooked: “six days shalt thou do all thy work.” This “work” for us of course includes perfectly performing all the “good works that God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Christ is the only one that ever kept the sabbath, in that every six days of His life on earth He did all His work, in no way coming “short of the glory of God” in thought, word or deed (compare Rom. 3:23).

Heb. 4:1-10 explains that God’s sabbath was a shadow or type of a Christian’s having ceased from his own works to be righteous before God and his resting in the

finished work of **Christ**, which included both **His perfect** law keeping and paying the whole world's **penalty** for having broken God's laws in thought, word and deed. Verse 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God", does **not** denote an obligation to keep a literal weekly sabbath, but a resting or ceasing "from his own works" to enter into the **perpetual spiritual rest** of salvation in Christ. (v. 10). "The wages of sin is **death**, but the **gift** of God is **eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "Christ tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). **Every day** is a Christian's sabbath in a **spiritual** sense. "We are the circumcision (of the heart, and not so-called 'spiritual Israel') who worship God in the **spirit** and have **no confidence in the flesh**", i.e. carnal ordinances (Phil. 3:3).

Those who are too self-righteously proud to believe the gospel of the **grace** of God, that our **only hope** for heaven lies in our humbly accepting **Christ's** imputed righteousness and His **vicarious** death, stubbornly refuse to believe that "**Christ** is the **end** of the law for righteousness to every one that **believeth**" on Him (Rom. 10:4). They will compass sea and land to bring people under the law. Paul speaks of such in Gal. 4:17: "They zealously seek you in **no good way**; nay they desire to shut you out (i.e., from God's true servants) that ye may **seek them**" (R.V.). In all their law preaching they do not forget of course, the remunerative stressing of giving "**tithes**." Our giving today is entirely on a voluntary (not legal) basis. See Gal. 6:6; I Cor. 9 and II Cor. 9.

"O foolish Galatians," said Paul, "Who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey **the truth**? Ye **observe** days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Christ is become of **no effect** unto you (ye are **severed** from Christ, R.V.) whosoever of you are (or would be) justified by **the law**; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 3:1; 4:10, 11; 5:4). "Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren, that through this man (Christ) is preached unto you the **forgiveness of sins**; and by Him all that **believe** are justified from all things from which ye **could not be justified by the law of Moses**" (Acts 13:38, 39).

To know **how** to "believe" on Christ and **what** to believe to be instantly and eternally saved please read prayerfully I Cor. 15:1-5 along with John 3:36 and 5:24.

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Write for free study: "Fake Salvation."