

## Saturday is the Real Sabbath

### WHAT IS THE SABBATH?

The word Sabbath means rest. To do unnecessary work or severe work on the Sabbath is certainly to desecrate it. The purpose of the resting is to edify the mind with spiritual things and to make time for others. Christian hypocrites say that we may cease Sabbath-keeping for we have to move with the times. They know that there is not much work that has to be done on a Sunday. It can be left for another day. There is a lot of value in the Sabbath and for Christians to break it and bless its being broken shows that they would permit infanticide to keep up with the times which frequently translates as, "Let us do what everybody else does whether it is right or wrong."

Seventh-Day Adventism and Armstrongism or the Worldwide Church of God teach that God wants Christians to continue having the Sabbath on a Saturday as the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, the book which God wrote, decrees. The Jews observe the Sabbath on a Saturday. Christians, of course, claim that Jesus moved the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Some Christians believe that there is no Sabbath at all for Christians but that the Lord's Day is just for public worship and its observance completely optional.

### SIGN FOREVER

The Old Testament says that the seventh-Day Sabbath was a sign forever (Exodus 31) because it was the seventh day, the day when God rested after making the world (v17).

Christians say that it was a sign forever though it has been switched to Sunday. The problem is that it cannot be the sign the scriptures intend it to be if it is held on any other day than a Saturday. Think about it.

It was a sign for Israel that they were sacred (v13) because they had to imitate God by resting on that day.

The New Testament calls the Church the New Israel so it is still to be kept sacred by the Church. The Bible says it is not a picture of Israel which would not entitle it to be called new but a real Israel (Ephesians 2:11,12). The only way the Church could be legally Israel is if it were spiritually Israel and that would mean it would be subject to the Law. It would be free from the burden of the Law but not free from the duty of obedience. In other words, God helps his people now to keep the Law and if they break it Jesus bears the penalty of the Law so that now it is not a burden but a joy.

The New Testament insists on keeping the commandments of God which are at the very least the Ten Commandments (James 2:10-11) which is strange if fourth, keep the Sabbath day, was dropped. It goes on as if nothing was dropped and of course nothing was. If God had intended to abolish the Sabbath or change it – the fourth commandment does not just mean keep the Sabbath but it means to keep the seventh day as Sabbath – he would have either put something else in its place perhaps, pray together once a week or keep a Sabbath day every week. There was no provision for anybody who chose a day other than Saturday.

Hebrews 10:8 says that an Old Testament prophecy that God would put the commands of the Law in the minds and hearts of his people refers to the Christian Church so it proves the Sabbath was still in force for it was one of the things that the Old Testament prophet meant by commandments. The Sabbath law along with the other nine was spoken by God on Mount Sinai to the people which shows how solemn the ten commandments were and how they cannot be changed and how they are to be preserved even if the Law disappears which cannot happen (page 27, Which Day is the Christian Sabbath?). He did not reveal the others in such a strong way.

It may be objected that only Israel is told to keep the Sabbath meaning that the Hebrews alone were obliged to observe it. If Israel only got the commandment it does not prove that the Sabbath is for the children of Israel alone.

Remember, the non-Hebrew slaves they had had to honour the Sabbath because it is forbidden to tolerate anyone who did not live the way of the Lord (Leviticus 17; Deuteronomy 13). Non-Hebrews were allowed to enter Moses' true Church under certain conditions (Deuteronomy 23).

God in Isaiah 56 says that in the future eunuchs and Gentiles who keep the Sabbath and offer animal sacrifices will please him by doing so. He did not say a new Sabbath or anything so it is the seventh-day Sabbath that he means. He said "the Sabbath" not "a Sabbath". Remember, that is the least complicated interpretation so it is the one that is meant. This is still future for the Jews excluded non-Jews and eunuchs. Christians might try to say that he only meant that they will do it and

their conduct pleases him if it is sincere but he is not saying what they will do is objectively right. But God said all this would take place after he makes saints of his people by saving them in which time he promised that his truth would be accepted (Isaiah 55).

## COLOSSIANS 2 AND THE JEWISH SABBATH

Colossians 2:16-17 seems to forbid judging anybody who keeps the Sabbath and some say this is referring to those who use the Sunday Sabbath or who retain Saturday as the Sabbath. It is remarkable how Christianity gives no respect to those who wish to use Saturday. The verse seems inconclusive for sabbaths appears to refer to specifically Jewish feastday Sabbaths not the Saturday Sabbath.

## ROMANS 14

Christians object to the Bible teaching that we have to keep the seventh day holy. "Romans 14:5-8 says that the Christian should not esteem one day more than another implying that the Sabbath laws are abolished." We don't know what is meant by esteem here. It is likely means that every day should be treasured and dedicated to good works not just the Sabbath. This teaching is compatible with having a Sabbath day. The working days are for worshipping God by working and the Sabbath for worshipping God a different way and doing the more passive kinds of good works like helping others to rest and resting yourself so that you will be able to serve others better.

If Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday that does not prove that he wanted it to be the new Sabbath. The Saturday Sabbath can be a memorial of the resurrection even if it is not the day he rose. Nobody can argue that Jesus needed a memorial day that badly that he had to change the day for the Sabbath. Moreover, it is not days that commemorate but what people do on those days.

## APOSTLES AND THE SABBATH

Did the apostles keep the Sabbath after Jesus left? Even if they didn't that doesn't prove they were right. The apostles had a very difficult job to do and they claimed to be without error only in giving official revelations from God. They could only leave the essentials of the faith.

In Acts 1:12 we read that the apostles travelled for one day on a Sabbath after Jesus ascended into Heaven. The Law forbade this because it was walking too far. Exodus 16:9 said a man must stay near home on the Sabbath day. But the Law made allowances for emergencies. The apostles had to do a lot of travelling that day for their lives were at risk and they needed to keep their whereabouts under wraps. Also, priests were allowed to work and offer sacrifice on the Sabbath day and the apostles would have seen themselves as exceptions to the law because it was more important to go out and see Jesus ascend and worship with him than to sit in a house. And also the law in Exodus 16:9 really only means avoid as much travelling as possible. How do you know the apostles didn't keep it even then?

Christians say that the New Testament says that Sunday is the Sabbath for the collection was taken that day and so it must have been a public collection (page 118, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties) for why just privately collect on a Sunday when you can do it any day? Only 1 Corinthians 16:2 mentions the collection but it does not say it can only be taken during divine service. It could have been a private collection made from house to house the day after the Sabbath for it was regarded as sinful to collect on the Saturday Sabbath. And Corinthians never says that this collection arrangement on that particular day was universal. To work out that Sunday is the Sabbath from it is just getting carried away. The collection was prepared the day before the Sabbath, Friday, for people only know what they can give at the end of the working week and it was not collected until the day after the Sabbath by the collectors out of deference for the Sabbath rest.

It could be argued that the collection was against the rule of avoiding needless work on the Sabbath so that this was not the Sabbath.

There is no reason to think that the breaking of the bread was the Eucharist so how dare the Christians say that the breaking of bread on the first day means that it is the Sabbath. And if it were the Eucharist, it makes no difference. It must have been a love feast in which bread was shared. Jesus broke bread this way a few times the post-resurrection times (implying by the way, that the Eucharist was not a sacrament when it could be replaced by merely sharing bread).

Some say that the Bible only intended the people who lived in the Holy Land to keep the Sabbath because elsewhere Saturday falls at different times. God would not care about Saturday falling on different times at different places as long as it was kept as the Sabbath. Having a day for him mattered and he was not going to do without it over the fact that the world goes around. Saturday in Russia is Saturday even if Saturday starts and ends earlier or later than somewhere else. Anyway, how do you know that the Hebrews could not have had the Sabbath on at the same time wherever they were?

The Hebrews were not allowed to light the fire on the Sabbath day which is taken to imply that the Sabbath was for the land of Israel only when it is too cold to do without a fire in other places. But there were ways around that problem.

Here is a faulty argument for the first day Sabbath.

“Paul was one week at Troas (Acts 20:5-12). At the end of this wait of a week he joined a big Sunday service. This was a Sabbath service for then he would not have needed to wait a week but merely until Saturday night. Nobody can say that the first day there is really Saturday.”

This appalling argument comes from Archer’s book (page 118). It is not disclosed why Paul stayed a week or why the service was on Sunday or why Paul didn’t wait until the day before. You cannot build arguments on silence.

The Jews believed that Saturday started on our Friday night. But the service could have been held late on Saturday night. In Jewish reckoning of time the service therefore took place on Sunday the first day of the week. But for the people of Troas they were worshipping on the Saturday for they didn’t believe Sunday started until midnight. We could simply have a different way of reckoning time. Acts is using the Jewish method. So these people may have worshipped on the Saturday Sabbath day after all.

Verse 7 merely says that they met on the first day to break bread that is all. We read in the book of Acts that the early believers kept all things in common and were virtually a convent. They probably just broke bread before going to work to remember the rising of the Lord because it was convenient and they virtually lived together anyway. You cannot infer a Sunday Sabbath from that. The Jews broke bread at special feasts so you don’t even know if this bread breaking was a Eucharist. They said, “Blessed are you O Lord our God king of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth”, and then they broke the bread and shared it.

There is no evidence in the Bible that God does not want Christians to keep the Saturday Sabbath. But there is more evidence that there is no evidence.

## BAD ARGUMENTS FOR 7TH DAY SABBATH

Watch out for the wrong arguments for the Seventh-Day Sabbath.

Acts 13 where non-Jews beg Paul to return to preach the next Jewish Sabbath does not prove the Saturday Sabbath was still in force for their reason is not stated. We don’t know why Paul agreed to wait a week to evangelise. It could be that Paul had to wait until he got them all together.

Paul preaching on every Sabbath (Acts 18) proves nothing for it was the day to talk to Jews when they were all gathered together. Acts 18 says Paul worked during the week and went to church on the Sabbath. It does not say he worked every day including Sunday so it is no proof against the Sunday Sabbath.

Jesus keeping the Sabbath or the feasts is not evidence of their validity for Christians today because even God would not object to a person keeping them if they wanted to as long as they did not feel obligated or make them something harmful or heretical.

It is said that the seventh-day Sabbath was not a day for worship but of rest and that since the New Testament has a day for worship, that that day cannot be the Sabbath. But the Law says that its Sabbath is sacred to God which only makes sense if it is a day for him and to spend in quietness thinking of him and praying.

Exodus 20:10 has God saying in the ten commandments that even foreigners among the people of Israel who didn’t believe were not allowed to work on the Sabbath. This shows that the Sabbath commandment was thought to be for all nations not just Judaism. They could have let their slaves and foreigners work as long as it didn’t affect the Israelite wish to relax on the Sabbath. It made sense to leave the foreigners to deal with the emergencies on the Sabbath. It didn’t happen which shows that Jesus was wrong to challenge the Jews of his day for saying it was right to forget about emergencies on the Sabbath day. God really was as strict as the Jews said. God forbade good works on the Sabbath so today the Church letting some people work on the Sabbath shows that the Church is disobedient to God. God after all refused to do any good works on the Sabbath day during the creation and Exodus says Saturday must be kept as a strict Sabbath of rest because God rested that day. He didn’t even need to rest but he rested that day to mark it out as the Sabbath. No power on earth could possibly change the Sabbath day to Sunday for the Sabbath is about the creation not the resurrection. God went to too much trouble to mark out Saturday as the Sabbath day for it to be any other way. It seems unimportant to us but to him it was extremely important.

The religions which observe the Saturday Sabbath are right to say that the Bible did not authorise the Christian Church to switch the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. By the way, the doctrine that Sunday observance is the Mark of the Beast reposes on the prophetic delusions of Ellen G. White who formed Seventh-Day Adventism and not on the Bible though she claimed that it alone was the word of God.

## CONCLUSION

The Jewish Sabbath is still in force. Christians should be resting and worshipping on a Saturday.

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