

The Sabbath or First Day of the Week?

Introduction

1. It is very important that we ensure that we do the will of God in all aspects of our lives.
2. In this lesson we will examine which day that Christians are taught to keep, the Sabbath or the first day of the week?
 - A. The only way we can really know which day to observe is to study the Word of God.

Sabbath Law Revealed at Sinai, Not at Creation

1. It is often alleged that the Sabbath was given at the creation for all men of all times to observe. This is not true.
 - A. The Sabbath was not revealed until the Law was given by Moses to Israel at Sinai. This was acknowledged by Nehemiah.
Nehemiah 9:13-14
 - B. Moses, who revealed the Sabbath to the people at Sinai, explained its having been “hallowed” by God in his narrative about creation in Genesis 2:1-3.
 - 1) Moses does not say in Genesis that it was hallowed then, only that God rested then, and hallowed it later at Sinai.
 - a. If it had been hallowed and commanded at the creation, then the patriarchs would have had to observe it (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.).

Sabbath Keeping Belonged to the Jewish Age

1. During the 2500 years of the Patriarchal Age, there was no command for or example of anyone keeping the Sabbath day as such.

A. Just prior to the giving of the Sabbath, God told the children of Israel not to gather any manna on the seventh day. God was testing them.

Exodus 16:4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

B. The fact that Moses told them exactly what to do on this occasion shows that they had not been observing such a day.

Exodus 16:22-26

1) It was new to them!

2. For the 1500 years of Jewish Law, we can read of the Sabbath command and penalty for violating it. A careful reading of the Bible will show when the Sabbath day observance was given, and to whom.

A. The Sabbath was given when the children of Israel came out of Egyptian bondage.

Exodus 20:1-2, 8

B. Purpose of the Sabbath.

1) The Sabbath observance was given to the Jews as a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Deuteronomy 5:15 And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

C. A sign between God and Israel.

- 1) “The Sabbath is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever.....throughout their generations”
(Exodus 31:12-17; Ezekiel 20:10-12)

D. A special law for the fleshly descendants of Jacob.

Deuteronomy 5:2-3, 12 The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.....Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.

- 1) A careful reading of the context will show the covenant Moses refers to in this passage is the Sabbath law, as he listed all the ten commandments.

3. There is NO distinction in the Law of God and the Law of Moses.

A. Sabbatarians teach that the law of God and the law of Moses are different laws. They tell us that the ten commandments, which includes the Sabbath, is the law of God, and is still binding today. Sabbath keepers say that the law of Moses is merely the ceremonial law, and that law has been done away with.

- 1) The Bible makes no distinction between the two. They are one and the same law.
(2 Chron 34:14; Ezra 7:6; Mark 7:10; 2 Chron 31:3)
- 2) God gave the law of Moses and Moses gave the law of God. Moses was only the law giver (John 1:17). It was all God’s law!
Nehemiah 8:1, 8
 - a. Moses was simply carrying out the wishes of God.
Nehemiah 8:14

The only reason some make an attempt to show there is a difference in the law of God and the law of Moses is to bind Sabbath keeping on people today.

The Old Covenant Has Been Done Away in Christ

1. The covenant, which contained the ten commandments, was made at the time the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt.

1 Kings 8:9, 21

Deuteronomy 4:13 So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.

- A. What does the New Testament say about these commandments which were written on "two tablets of stone?"

2 Corinthians 3:6-14

- 1) You might want to underscore the words "engraved on stones"; passing away; "taken away in Christ."

- B. Paul told the Ephesians:

Ephesians 2:15-16 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

- C. The writer of Hebrews says it in a way that there can be no doubt about it:

Hebrews 8:7-13

- 1) We, today are reconciled to God in the New Testament church which was made possible by the death of Christ on the cross, when we obey the gospel.

Colossians 2:11-14

Sabbath Keepers Do Not Keep the Sabbath Properly

1. The Sabbath was a day of rest.
Exodus 35:1-3
 - A. Do you know of any Sabbath keepers who observe this rest-rule today?

2. The penalty for violating the Sabbath law.
Numbers 15:32-36
 - A. God means what He says and says what He means. Where is the passage of scripture that teaches that the Sabbath day is binding, but that the penalty for violating the Sabbath law is removed?

3. A burnt offering.
Numbers 28:9-10
 - A. Sabbath keepers do not observe this command today. Why not? Where is the passage that teaches that the Sabbath day is still binding but not the burnt offering?

4. Travel restricted.

Exodus 16:29 See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. **Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."**

- A. Travel was restricted to less than a mile on the Sabbath day. Why don't Sabbatarians respect this regulation? It looks like people would try to be more consistent in their teaching and practice.

The First Day of the Week

- 1. God chose the first day of the week as the “Lord’s day.” John said:**

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day

A. Just what day is the Lord’s day?

- 1) Sabbath keepers tell us it is Saturday or the seventh day of the week. Sabbatarians say that men changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Many refer to the Lord’s day as a “Christian Sabbath.” The first day of the week is NEVER called the Sabbath.**
- 2) The New Testament finds the Lord’s people meeting on the first day of the week. In fact, a number of things took place on the first day of the week as recorded in the New Testament.**
 - a. Christ arose from the dead.
(Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1)**
 - b. Jesus met with His disciples.
(John 20:1, 19, 26)**
 - 1. Between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus met with His disciples on a number of occasions on the first day of the week.**

c. Great events of Acts 2.

- 1. Pentecost was always on the first day of the week (Lev 23:15)**
- 2. First gospel sermon was preached (Acts 2:22-36)**
- 3. The Lord's church had its beginning as men heard, believed, and were baptized "for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38, 47)**

d. The church assembled.

- 1. To observe the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7)**
- 2. To give of their means (1 Cor 16:1-2)**

NOTE: A Sabbath day passed by while Paul waited for the first day of the week, and he was silent about keeping the Sabbath day!

- The apostle Paul went into the Synagogues on the Sabbath in order to teach the gospel of Christ, not to honor the Sabbath day.**
Acts 17:2-3
Acts 18:4-7

2. If the Sabbath day was binding on these early Christians, why were they never told to do anything on that day?

A. Jesus, who was said to be "the Lord of the Sabbath", never commanded Christians to keep the Sabbath.

Conclusion

1. The Sabbath day served its purpose and then was taken out of the way.

A. Those who demand that the Sabbath law must be observed today need to answer Paul's question to the Galatians:

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

B. The greatest argument against Judaism, including Sabbath keeping, was in the form of an allegory of two women.

1) Take some time to study this story in Galatians 4, and you can see that we are not under the old law but under the law of Christ.

Galatians 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

C. Paul, who was once a strict keeper of the old law writes in Colossians 2:16-17:

Colossians 2:16-17 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, **but the substance is of Christ.**

2. Those of us who are "in Christ" do not need to, nor should we desire to, return to the inferior shadows of the old law.

