

Go Ahead, Ask!

Solid Bible answers to life's most difficult questions.

I have some questions about the Sabbath. Can you tell me a little more about the Sabbath?



Isn't the Sabbath only for the Jews and Sunday for the Christians?

Answer: Most are aware that the biblical Sabbath is on Saturday, "the seventh day," but this command is widely ignored by Christians today who claim that the Sabbath commandment was given only for the Jews (Ex. 20:10). What most Christians overlook is the fact that the Sabbath was instituted thousands of years before the Jewish nation was even founded. From the birth of creation, before the Jews even existed, we are told, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Gen. 2:3). At that time, there was no such thing as a Jewish nation. In fact, the nation of Israel was not formed for more than a thousand years after this, so the claim that the Sabbath was made for the Jews is not an accurate statement. Jesus Himself said that "the Sabbath was made for man" (Mk. 2:29). Notice, Jesus did not say that the Sabbath was for the Jews, which He very easily could have said, but rather, for mankind. Since the Jewish nation refused to accept Christ, God said, "there remains a rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). This is not merely talking about a spiritual rest, but literal obedience to all of God's laws. Today, Christians are in danger of committing the same sin Israel committed in placing commandments of men above God's holy law.

Didn't Jesus change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday in honor of the resurrection?

Answer: This is probably the most common, but also the weakest argument used for breaking the Sabbath. Christ obeyed the Sabbath while here, "as His custom was" (Luke 4:16). While the Pharisees accused Christ and His disciples of breaking the Sabbath, Christ said they were "guiltless" and what they did was "lawful" to do on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:7, 12). All through His ministry Christ observed the Sabbath. Nowhere do we hear Him say the Sabbath was changed or that it would be changed in the future. Rather, He said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law," but "till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17, 18). Think about it, if God was going to change one of the very Ten Commandments, wouldn't He make it extremely clear? And yet, it does not say that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday to honor the resurrection. While many claim that Christ waited in the grave until Sunday to make a new Sabbath, there is no biblical evidence for this. The truth is that Christ rested in the grave during the Sabbath hours to show that the Sabbath was still sacred. Just as He rested on the Sabbath after the work of creation, He rested on the Sabbath after the work of redemption.

What day did the apostles of Christ worship on after the resurrection?

Answer: The Bible says the disciples continued to keep the Sabbath after the resurrection. Paul, who wasn't even converted until after the resurrection, continued to keep the Sabbath every week "as his custom" (Acts 17:2). We are told that he "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks," where he continued "a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:4, 11). The Bible says that "when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath" (Acts 13:42). Outside of this, Acts 16:2 says that "on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there" (Acts 16:2). While some use a few verses that make no mention of the Sabbath or its change, in an attempt to endorse Sunday worship, they ignore the consistent thread of verses we find throughout the book of Acts that speak of Sabbath observance. From the Bible, we see that Sabbath observance continued long after the resurrection by Paul and the apostles. History records that the Sabbath was continued by Christians all the way down to the fifth century.

Didn't the ceremonial laws and Sabbaths end after the cross?

Answer: Colossians 2:14 says that "the handwriting of requirements" were "nailed...to the cross," like food and drink offerings, and Jewish feasts, regulated by the new moon cycle, also referred to as ceremonial Sabbaths. That's why Paul adds, "let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths" (Col. 2:16). These were the "grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths" of the sanctuary service (Eze. 45:17). The festivals were called sanctuary sabbaths. The Bible calls the feast of trumpets "a Sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets" (Lev. 23:24). It calls "the Day of Atonement... a Sabbath" (Lev. 23:28, 32). There was even "a Sabbath... for the land" (Lev. 25:4). The Jewish festivals and Sabbaths were "besides the Sabbaths of the Lord" (Lev. 23:38). Since sanctuary laws and Sabbath feast days were shadows that pointed forward to Christ, after His death on the cross, all the sanctuary laws and regulations ended, but the law and the Sabbath are still very much binding. That is why we are no longer called to kill lambs when we sin or observe Jewish feast days, but we are still required to obey God's holy law, which includes the seventh-day Sabbath.

Doesn't Paul say that we can worship God on any day in Romans 14:5?

Answer: While some have tried to use this verse to say we can worship any day, nowhere in the chapter do we find any mention of the Sabbath. While Paul says, "one person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike," there is no mention of Sabbath worship at all (Rom. 14:5). When we look at the context, we find what Paul is talking about. The chapter begins and ends by talking about what we "eat" (Rom. 14:2, 21). Then, right before mentioning days, he says, "let not him who does not eat judge him who eats," and right after the mention of days, he says, "he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat" (Rom. 14:6). In the context, it is clear that Paul is talking about not eating—or fasting days. Since feast days were also associated with fasting, these days may also reference feast fast-days, but they clearly had nothing to do with the Sabbath. Paul was saying that he who observes a day of fasting "observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord...and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat" (Rom. 14:6). The chapter is talking about fasting, and it was for each to determine if and what day they chose to, or not to, fast.

If Jesus and the apostles didn't change the Sabbath, then who changed it?

Answer: Since there is no record of the change of the Sabbath in the Bible, it would be safe to conclude that there must be records somewhere outside the Bible of this change. The fact is there are multiple written accounts outside of the Bible explaining where the change came from. In their Catechism, the Catholic church admits, "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the council of Laodicea (A.D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday" (*The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, Rev. Peter Geiermann, 2nd ed, p. 50). Cardinal James Gibbons adds, "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify" (Gibbons, *Faith of Our Fathers*, p. 111). According to historical records and admissions, Sunday, as a day of worship, was instituted by the Catholic Church without any biblical support.

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