

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** To show that Jesus instituted the Sabbath, kept the Sabbath, and expects us to keep the Sabbath for our own spiritual growth and a sign of our faith in and allegiance to Him.

**TEXTS:**

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|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. REV 4:11 (14:6-7)               | 9. LK 4:16                  |
| 2. COL 1:13-16 (JN 1:1-3, 14)      | 10. MT 12:12                |
| 3. GE 2:2-3                        | 11. AC 17:1-2 (16:13; 18:4) |
| 4. IS 40:28 (EX 31:17)             | 12. AC 13:14, 42-44         |
| 5. EX 20:8-11                      | 13. MT 24:20                |
| 6. MK 2:27-28 (IS 58:13; REV 1:10) | 14. IS 66:22-23             |
| 7. EZE 20:12, 20 (PHP 1:6)         | 15. EZE 22:26; MK 7:7, 9    |
| 8. LK 23:50-24:1                   | 16. JN 14:15                |

**THE STUDY:**

- 1. What makes God worthy of our worship? REV 4:11 (14:6-7)**  
*The Bible declares that the reason God is to be worshiped, the reason He is worthy of receiving our worship, is because He is our Creator. In the last days, a clarion call goes forth to every creature under heaven to "Worship Him who made...," God, the Creator of all things.*
- 2. Which person of the Godhead is the active agent in creation? COL 1:13-16 (JN 1:1-3, 14)**  
*Jesus was the active agent in creation. This means that earth's final call to worship is in a special sense a call to give honor, glory and praise to Jesus as our Savior.*
- 3. How did Jesus end His work of creating? GE 2:2-3**  
*At the end of the creation account, we find that Jesus commemorated His creative works on the seventh day by resting, blessing the day and sanctifying it.*
- 4. Was the rest that Jesus entered on the Sabbath a physical rest? Was He tired? IS 40:28 (EX 31:17)**  
*The Bible says God does not get tired. His rest was not as much a physical rest as it was a spiritual rest. Certainly He rested from work, but not to take a nap; He "rested and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:17) as He viewed with satisfaction His finished work. Thus the Sabbath day became a memorial of God's creative work.*
- 5. What word does the fourth commandment begin with? EX 20:8-11**  
*"Remember..." This means that the purpose of the Sabbath was to keep in our memory that in six days Jesus created all things; He created us; He loves us, and set aside that time for us to receive a special blessing of communion with Him.*
- 6. In light of these facts, what title does Jesus take upon Himself? MK 2:27-8 (IS 58:13; REV 1:10)**  
*Jesus calls Himself the "Lord of the Sabbath." The Sabbath is His holy day. This is why the Sabbath is called "The Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10).*
- 7. What else is the Sabbath to remind us of? EZE 20:12, 20 (PHP 1:6)**  
*The Sabbath commandment tells us to "keep it holy", but an unholy being cannot keep anything holy. Therefore, inherent in the commandment itself is a promise that it is Christ who makes and keeps us holy by His creative power. Now, fallen in sin, the Sabbath in a special sense is a sign to us of Christ's re-creative power; that He will re-create us into holy beings again, and we can rest from our own works of trying to save ourselves, trusting that His work in us will be completed (Phil. 1:6). Thus the Sabbath becomes a sign to us that it is God who sanctifies us, or makes us holy.*

**8. Which day is the Sabbath day? LK 23:50-24:1**

*The Bible tells us that Jesus was crucified on what is commonly called today “Good Friday”; His disciples began to embalm the body, but seeing that the “Sabbath according to the commandment” was drawing near, they kept the Sabbath on the following day, and on the third day, which is commonly known as “Easter Sunday,” the disciples came again to the tomb to finish embalming the body, but they were too late; Jesus was risen. The seventh-day Sabbath, then, would be on Saturday, the day between Friday and Sunday. This is clear from a common dictionary and most calendars; in addition, there are over 104 languages in the world whose name for the seventh day is “Sabbath” - Sabado (Spanish); Subota (Russian); Sabato (Italian); Samedi (French); Sobota (Polish); Sabattum (Latin); and Samstag (German). In fact, in Ghana, West Africa, many tribes call Saturday “memenede,” which means “I AM THAT I AM’s day” (see Ex. 3:14; Jn. 8:58).*

**9. Did Jesus keep the Sabbath day? LK 4:16**

*It was Jesus’ custom to go to worship services on the Sabbath day. But some ask, “wasn’t that just to keep the custom of the Jews?” Keep in mind that Jesus was crucified because He didn’t keep the customs of the Jews. In fact, one of the chief reasons the Jewish leaders sought to kill Jesus was for Sabbath-breaking (see Jn. 5:8-16).*

**10. Were the acts of Jesus on the Sabbath a violation of the Sabbath commandment? MT 12:12**

*Jesus only supported what He believed was in accordance with the commandment, or what was “lawful” (Mt. 12:12).*

**11. Did the apostles keep the Sabbath day? AC 17:1-2 (16:13; 18:4)**

*There is abundant evidence in the New Testament that the followers of Christ kept the seventh-day Sabbath. Just like Jesus, Paul’s custom was to worship on the Sabbath day, even when there was no synagogue around (AC 16:13).*

**12. Was there a new day set aside for Gentile believers to worship on? AC 13:14-16, 42-44**

*Even the Gentile believers kept the Sabbath day; in fact, this would have been a great opportunity for the apostle Paul to introduce them to a new Christian day of worship (if one had been instituted; evidently, it had not), but instead he encouraged the Gentiles to come back “the next Sabbath”.*

**13. Did Jesus expect His followers to keep the Sabbath after His ascension to heaven? MT 24:20**

*Yes.*

**14. Will people keep the Sabbath in the New Earth? IS 66:22-23**

*The Bible says that even in the new earth, we will be honoring God on the Sabbath day.*

**15. Does it really matter to God which day we keep? EZE 22:26; MK 7:7, 9**

*God says He is profaned among His people when they make no difference between His holy day and other common days. Jesus said our worship is empty if we are honoring our tradition in place of Scripture.*

**16. How did Jesus ask us to express our love to Him? JN 14:15**

*Jesus said “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” He also said “Remember the Sabbath day.” It was given at creation, and repeated at Sinai; it was kept by God’s people; it was kept by Jesus; the apostles kept the Sabbath; and in the new earth His people will honor Him on the Sabbath day; it is the special sign between God and His people that He is their God.*

**APPEAL:**

The Bible says “Remember the Sabbath day...” He knew the devil would try to make us forget this sign of His love and power to save. Jesus is inviting you to show your love and loyalty to Him. Will you choose just now to honor Him by worshiping Him on His holy day – the seventh-day Sabbath?

## DIFFICULT TEXTS/OBJECTIONS:

**“The Lord’s Day,” the new day of worship (Rev. 1:10)** – Many Christians say that this text is speaking about Sunday as the new Sabbath for Christians. However, the only day in the Scriptures that the Lord claims as His special day is the seventh day Sabbath (Mk. 2:27; Is. 58:13).

**“One person esteems one day above another; another person esteems every day alike...” (Ro. 14:5)** –

This is used to say that it is up to us to choose which day to keep holy, and that the seventh day isn’t important to God anymore. However, it must be noted that the days being spoken of here are days that people esteem, not days that God esteems. Furthermore, if you look at the first verse in the chapter, Paul is discussing “doubtful things” – that is, things that are not clear from the Bible, like the observance of certain holidays. Sabbath observance has always been clear from the Bible. As the apostle is talking about days in connection with food, it is likely he is speaking here about the observance of special fast days.

**“The disciples came together on the first day to break bread, signifying a new day of worship” (Ac. 20:7)** – The argument here is that since all were present on the first day, it must have been a worship service. Besides the fact that there is no clear language that says anything regarding worship in the text, the Bible tells us elsewhere that the disciples broke bread daily from house to house (Ac. 2:46). There are actually eight “first day” (Sunday) texts in the Bible, and not a single one is in reference to a new Sabbath. Ac. 20:7 is the text we have just addressed. Mt. 28:1, Mk. 16:2, 9, Lk. 24:1 and Jn. 20:1 all refer to the disciples coming early on the first day and finding the tomb empty. Jn. 20:19 speaks of the disciples gathering on the evening of 1st day “for fear of the Jews.” 1 Co. 16:2, where the apostle Paul urged the believers to “lay in store” their offerings on the first day of the week, which we will address next.

**“Paul said the church should take a collection on the first day of the week, indicating that they were meeting for worship” (1 Co. 16:1-3)** – The fact is that the text doesn’t say when Paul will take up the collection; there’s only one day we KNOW that he WON’T be taking up a collection, and that’s on the first day. He instructs them to “lay up” something on the first day, so that *when he comes* it will *already* be set aside. Likely he was telling them to lay aside an offering at the beginning of the week before they spent the rest. Once again, there is no mention of a worship service here.

**“The law was nailed to the cross” (Col. 2:13-17)** – This is probably the most common argument given against the Sabbath. However, there are several things in the text that make it very clear that it is not the Sabbath, or the Ten Commandments, that Paul is speaking about.

1. He speaks of the “handwriting of ordinances” that was “against us”. This language is almost taken verbatim from Deuteronomy 31:24-26, where the Bible speaks of the ceremonial law (the law regarding instructions about sacrifices). It says that Moses wrote them and placed them “beside” the ark of the covenant that they may be a witness “against” the people. This is in direct contrast to the Ten Commandments, that were written with the finger of God (Ex. 31:17-18) and placed “inside” the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:16).

2. The Colossians passage says “let no one judge you” regarding food, drink, new moons, feast days or sabbaths. The Ten Commandments says nothing about food, drink, new moons or feast days; it only speaks of the Sabbath; however, many people do not realize that the ceremonial feast days had sabbaths connected with them. Lev. 23 speaks of all of these feast Sabbaths, as well as the Seventh-day Sabbath, differentiating between them in vs. 37-38 by saying “These are the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations (including feast sabbaths)... besides the Sabbaths of the Lord (the weekly Sabbath).” Clearly the language of Colossians is referring to these ceremonial ordinances and not the Ten Commandments (cf. Heb. 9:10).

3. Some claim that the ceremonial law and the moral law of Ten Commandments were inseparably connected, and that if one was done away with, the other must be also. This is simply not true. The “Law of Moses” as the ceremonial law was often referred to, symbolized the work of Christ and pointed forward to a definite time when it would meet a fulfillment. These “types” were referred to as “shadows” (Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 10:1). This is why Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:19 that the ordinances regarding circumcision were inconsequential compared to the “Commandments of God.”

4. In Colossians, Paul speaks of the ordinances in the past tense (“that was against us, which was contrary to us...” v.14); however, He speaks of the Ten Commandments in the present tense (“The law is holy” – Ro. 7:12; “‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise...” – Eph. 6:1). Very simply put, it would have been a sin for an Israelite NOT to offer an animal sacrifice before the cross; yet after the cross, there was no longer a need to offer sacrifices. It also would have been a sin to steal before the cross; but it is also a sin to steal after the cross. The ceremonial laws have met their fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ; the Ten Commandments, on the other hand, will not pass away “till heaven and earth pass away” (Mt. 5:18).

**“Hasn’t the calendar been changed?”** Indeed, the calendar has been changed many times, but no change of calendar dates has ever affected the weekly cycle; Monday is still followed by Tuesday, etc.

**“I think God is happy as long as we worship one day in seven.”** First of all, this is a fatal assumption. God doesn’t decide things on a whim. He means what he says (Adam & Eve – “this tree” vs. “that tree” – Ge. 2:16-17; Cain and Abel – one sacrifice vs. another – Ge. 4:1-8; Nadab and Abihu – “this fire” or “that fire” – Lev. 10:1-6). The Bible says He doesn’t change (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17). If a man was engaged to a woman who had six sisters, would he care which one showed up on the wedding day, or would he be okay with “one in seven”? Furthermore, if a person were to choose a day on which to worship, why not choose the one God has already chosen?

**“I worship every day; every day is my Sabbath.”** When do you work? There are six working days (Ex. 20:8-11; Eze. 46:1). Every day may be *your* Sabbath, but the Seventh day is *God’s Sabbath*.

**“Jesus is my Sabbath.”** In Hebrews 4:4-10 the Bible says “For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works’; and again in this place: ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, ‘Today,’ after such a long time, as it has been said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.’ If Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.” This is usually coupled with Matthew 11:28 where Jesus says “Come to Me... and I will give you rest...”

The conclusion some people draw is that the seventh-day Sabbath pointed forward to our spiritual rest in Jesus, and God spoke of “another day” “called “today,” meaning that the seventh-day is not important. “My true Sabbath rest,” they say, “is found in Him.”

While we would not disagree that Jesus is the *source* of spiritual rest, or even that the seventh-day Sabbath is all about resting in Jesus, there are still a number of problems with the idea that this somehow removes the obligation to obey the fourth commandment. The Bible says that every spiritual blessing comes to us in Christ (Eph. 1:3). All spiritual ordinances find their meaning in Jesus, but that doesn’t do away with the need to observe them. Baptism, for example, finds its true spiritual meaning in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Do we do away with baptism and say “Now Jesus is my baptism?” The Lord’s Supper finds its spiritual significance in Jesus as well. Should we get rid of the ordinance because it finds its meaning in Jesus, and just say “Jesus is my communion?” Of course not.

Further, the Sabbath was to be a holy convocation (Lev. 23:3). A convocation is a gathering – “a day of sacred assembly” (NIV). From a relational standpoint, the Sabbath was a “date” between God and His people. The blessing of the Sabbath is found within the “date” experience. Choosing not to join in the public worship of Jesus on the Sabbath day because “He IS the Sabbath” is like standing up your fiancé on a date because what really matters is your relationship!

Finally, regarding Hebrews 4, the passage is actually dealing with the failure of God’s people to enter into the spiritual rest offered in Christ. The repeated emphasis is that they did not enter in because of their unbelief which was manifested in their rebellion and disobedience to the will of God (Heb. 3:12, 16, 18-19; 4:2, 6, 11). It is strangely ironic that someone would even attempt to use such a passage to justify disobedience to one of God’s commandments!

### **Is the Sabbath necessary for salvation? Will someone be lost who doesn't keep the Sabbath?**

There are some who make the point that since we are not saved by our works, how can we be lost by them? If we're not saved by our works, why work? The better question to ask would be "It is possible for someone to be saved who doesn't love Jesus?" Jesus said "If you love me keep My commandments." Are we saved by keeping His commandments? No. But a person who loves Jesus will keep His commandments. The Bible says "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 Jn. 5:2-3).

We could just as easily ask Are keeping *any* of the commandments necessary for salvation? Can a person be saved if they keep stealing, lying or committing adultery? The fact is that those who continues to do such things "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Co. 6:9-10). "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8).

Perhaps someone is asking on behalf of a friend or loved one who is a believer but doesn't keep the Sabbath, or someone who is now deceased who never kept the Sabbath. The Bible is clear that God judges us "according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have." (2 Cor. 8:12). The apostle Paul said "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent..." (Ac. 17:30). This means that God will excuse sins committed in ignorance. However, once a person knows His truth, they are expected to repent and follow Him.

If a person learns about the Sabbath but chooses not to observe it, they are not just rejecting the Sabbath, but the Lord of the Sabbath. They're rejecting the will of God. They are sinning willfully, and the Bible says "If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26-7).