

Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?

This is a good question. We need to know the answer. If Sunday is the Christian Sabbath, are Christians prohibited from doing things? Our Bibles will tell us the answer.

The word “Sabbath” means ‘to cease, desist, or rest.’ God rested on the seventh day of Creation. The word “Sabbath” first appears in our Bible in Exodus 16. There is no indication that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah or any of the other early patriarchs ever kept the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath was given to the nation of Israel

Ex. 31:12-14a “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you.’”

Ex. 31:16-17a ‘So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.’ “It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever...”

The Sabbath was given for a specific reason.

Deut 5:15 “And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.”

There were special things to be done on the Sabbath.

- No work was to be done (Ex. 31:15)
- No cooking to be done (Ex. 16:23-26)
- Not to start a fire (Ex. 35:1-3)
- Not to pick up sticks (Num. 15:32-36)

- Not to sell or buy (Neh. 13:15-21; Amos 8:5)
- Not to travel more than 5/8 of a mile (Acts 1:12)
- Sacrifice two lambs (Num. 28:9-10)

The Penalty for Violating the Sabbath was Severe.

Ex. 31:14 “Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.”

Christians Worshipped on Sunday

- Christians met on the “first day of the week” to break bread or observe the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7).
- Upon the first day of the week Christians gave (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- It was on the “first day of the week” that Jesus was resurrected from the dead (Mt. 28:1).

The New Testament Never Refers to Sunday as the Christian Sabbath.

The Bible refers to Sunday as “the first day of the week.” The apostle John was in the Spirit on the “Lord’s Day” (Rev. 1:10) which may have been Sunday. Sunday is never referred to as the Sabbath Day.

Christians are not told to keep the Sabbath Holy.

Christians are not to observe all the special things that went along with the Sabbath. Christians may cook, travel or even shop on the Sabbath day. Christians do not face the penalties for violating the Sabbath. Sunday does not have any restrictions except to worship the Lord with other saints. It is not wrong to do other things on Sunday. The Sabbath does not have the special meaning for many Christians that it did for the nation of Israel. Keeping the Sabbath has no significance for a Christian.

Sunday is not the Christian Sabbath.

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