



The Sabbath

A discussion article on the 7th Day Adventists belief in the importance of Worshipping on a Saturday.

Scriptures for the Sabbath Rest

GENESIS 2:2

2 *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.*

3 *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

There is no mention of a day of rest or Sabbath after these verses until the time of Moses. The very first use of the word Sabbath in the Bible is in Exodus 6 where, after Israel had complained to Moses about the lack of food, God sends manna. For six days God sent this special food each morning. The manna had to be gathered off the ground each morning but on the sixth day there was twice as much as before. Moses told the people that this was done to ensure they didn't work on the seventh day by gathering the manna, as that day is "*the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD:*" (Exodus 16 v23) God had hinted in verse 5 that He would supply bread and that on the sixth day He would supply double the amount. This allowed Israel to have a rest or Sabbath day.

EXODUS 16:22

22 ¶ *And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.*

23 *And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning*

24 *And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.*

25 *And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field.*

26 *Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.*

27 *And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.*

28 *And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?*

29 *See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.*

30 *So the people rested on the seventh day.*

The Seventh day, our Saturday, was formally documented as the Sabbath, or a day of rest, when Moses received the 10 Commandments from God. It had already been instigated by the supply of manna, but the fourth commandment really laid out how definite God was about resting, and it took the necessity for keeping the Sabbath into the future, beyond the time of manna.

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EXODUS 20:8

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

This is re-emphasised in EXODUS 31:12

12 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.

14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Summary:

Sabbath is Rest.

God rested on the seventh day of creation and was refreshed.

The Lord God created the Sabbath for His people Israel when he sent manna, a double portion on the sixth day and nothing at all on the seventh. So Sabbath was a day of rest.

This was enshrined when it became one of the Ten Commandments.

The emphasis was on not working.

It was a sign between God and the children of Israel.

Has the Sabbath Rest Always Applied?

The Exodus 16 and 20 reading are the first recorded references of God's people being required to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest. Those that went before this time were not under this, or any, law.

The covenant agreement God had with Abraham was unconditional. Abraham didn't have to do anything as his side of the covenant. God promised Abraham a new land, that he would have a son through Sarah his wife and that he would be father of many nations; and that was it.

Certainly Abraham believed God and that belief in God's word was counted for his righteousness, but that was not a requirement under the covenant and nor was there any requirement to keep a Sabbath day.

In other words Abraham was seen as being sinless and accepted by God because he believed God's Word for his day. Nothing more was required, and nothing less was accepted. There was no keeping of a Sabbath day nor any other of the Ten Commandments.

Abraham went to paradise purely because of his faith in God's

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Word. Abraham did not have to keep the Ten Commandments. He didn't even have the Ten Commandments; they came over 500 years later.

The Point?

If keeping the Sabbath, and the other commandments, are absolutely essential for a life acceptable to God then Adam, Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to name a few, all failed to make it. And we know that isn't true because as Jesus pointed out to the Sadducees, God **is** (present tense) the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. And if God is, at this moment, their God, then they must still be alive and in heaven.

Up until the giving of the manna and the law on Sinai there is no Bible record of God's people keeping the Sabbath. If keeping the Law, including the Sabbath is essential, why is it that God's previous agreements with Enoch, Noah, and Abraham never mentioned that?

Could it be that keeping Saturday as a Holy Day was only for Israel? While they are blinded to the Grace of God they must remain under the Law? Will they remain in that state until the return of Jesus Christ?

Was Keeping the Sabbath the Absolute?

No, they died in the wilderness.

The people of Israel kept the Sabbath in the wilderness from the time they received manna and the Ten Commandments. Yet that generation died in the wilderness; not because they didn't keep the

Sabbath, for they did keep it, but for not accepting the Word of the Lord to go and take the Promised Land.

Having seen all of God's miracles when they arrived at the Promised Land they were fazed by the fact that the people living in the land were giants. They knew that the land was as good as God had promised, it took two men to carry one bunch of grapes! But they were comfortable. God gave them Manna, they were pretty safe from other nations in the wilderness, their clothes and shoes didn't wear out, it wasn't a life of luxury, but at least they were safe. Now they were being asked to attack giants!

They listened to ten of the spies who had gone into the land to check it out and they were scared. Only the other two spies were not scared; Caleb and Joshua. The people did not accept God's Word to take their Promised Land, that is why they died in the wilderness in spite of having kept the Sabbaths.

HEBREWS 3:15

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

(Notice the word "rest" in verse 18. That word is Sabbath. Israel obeyed the seventh day Sabbath but God is saying that because of their unbelief they will not enter His Sabbath. There is therefore another Sabbath!



Does Keeping the Sabbath (Saturday) Apply To Christians?

The Seventh Day Adventist teaching is that this commandment applies today and to all people. They claim it should be the day when Christians worship God and that it is the day of rest.

There is no Bible reference for this at all. And nor, come to that, is there a command that Christians should worship on the first day of the week, Sunday.

St Paul certainly went to the synagogues on a Saturday to bring the Christian message to the Jews on his missionary journey but Acts 20 v7 clearly shows that the Christian Believers met on the Sunday to break bread and hear sermons. 1 Corinthians 16 v2 hints that this was a common practice.

Historians confirm that this was so, the orthodox Jews worshipped on the Saturday, Christians worshipped on the Sunday.

One of the arguments that Jesus did not change the Sabbath is based on the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew chapters 5,6, and 7 Jesus seems to change or expand the law, as below.

MATTHEW 5:17

17 ¶ *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

18 *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

19 *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

20 *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

21 ¶ *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:*

22 *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

23 *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;*

24 *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

25 *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

26 *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

27 ¶ *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Some teach that Jesus took the Law deeper, to the motives or the spirit of the matter; and that is right, He did. But, the argument continues that Jesus made no change to the Sabbath day. Not there He didn't but He did in Matthew 11.

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28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

A Sabbath is rest. If the word “rest” was not translated to English it would read,

28 *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Sabbath.*

29 *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find Sabbath unto your souls.*

Just as the other commandments of the law have a deeper spiritual meaning so does the Sabbath.

A Different Sabbath?

There is no Bible verse in the New Testament for Christians to keep either the Saturday or the Sunday as the Sabbath. There certainly are instructions in the Old Testament but there are also a few hints that the Saturday Sabbath is not for all time.

PSALM 95:8

8 *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

9 *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*

10 *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:*

11 *Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

David is speaking here of those who received the Law and kept the Sabbath day in the wilderness with Moses, yet David is speaking as God saying that they went wrong, they erred, and as a result they will not enter into God’s Sabbath.

This is the Old Testament reference to match the New Testament scripture in Hebrews 3. Both say that God has another Sabbath.

Jesus and the Sabbath

The religious leaders of the time condemned Jesus, and His disciples, for breaking the Sabbath on several occasions. In fact that was the key driver behind their determination to kill Him, and of course they were eventually successful.

MATTHEW 12:7

7 *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*

8 *For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.*

What crucified Jesus was that He didn't keep the sabbath day. The only two accusations they had against Jesus was that He broke the sabbath day and made Himself God. And He said He was Lord of the sabbath.

Statistics

The word Sabbath is used 116 times in the Bible, 55 of those are in the New Testament, although only one (in Colossians 2 v16) is after

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the book of Acts. Most of the New Testament references were where Jesus was accused of breaking the Sabbath.

The Reason Jesus Came

Jesus Christ came to fulfil the Law on our behalf.

Paul explained this in his letter to the Galatians in chapter 3

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Jesus came to offer the same sort of covenant as that He gave Abraham, an unconditional covenant. God has done all the work, fulfilled all the law, so that we can rest; that is, we can enter our Christian Sabbath.

Law and Grace

No one can keep the law. As Jesus said, in Matthew 5:20

“That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

So what Jesus offers is to live His life in us. His Holy Spirit changes us; we become a new creature in Him. That is real Christianity. He became man so that we might become a part of Him; His body on earth, His church, His Bride.

Obey God and Receive the Holy Ghost

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him,” said Peter to the High Priest (Acts 5 v32)

The common teaching of that verse is that God will give His Holy Ghost to those who obey the law, that is, the Ten Commandments.. But that isn't look at what that chapter is about. Peter and the apostles are able to discern the innermost thoughts of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. People flock to be healed and they see miracles taking place. Even when locked in prison an angel comes to let Peter and the other disciples out, and the guards see nothing. This was the Holy Ghost in action.

Then comes that verse about the Holy Ghost being given to those who obey God.

That the disciples had the Holy Ghost was irrefutable; that they were obeying God was proven by the signs and gifts of Holy Spirit in their lives.

But what were they doing to obey God?

They were meeting on Sundays, not the Jewish Sabbath; they were preaching that Jesus Christ was the only way to be saved, that you can't make it by obeying the 10 Commandments; and the correct rebirth includes repentance followed by water baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ; and so on.

The problem was that the High Priest and the sect of Sadducees didn't have the Holy Ghost, they had no healings or discernment,

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and no angels came to help them; yet they were the ones who kept the 10 Commandments.

So what were the apostles and disciples obeying?

They were obeying the voice of God for their day, the leading of the Holy Spirit. And if we want the Holy Spirit today then we must find God's Word for today and obey it.

History

Peter talks of creation, the flood and the coming fire of destruction and then he says, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (II PETER 3:8)

So Creation is not 6 x 24 hour days but 6 thousand years. And the Day that God rested on was not a 24 hour Saturday but 1,000 years. And this is a type of the millennium, the Day of the Lord, the One Thousand Year reign of Christ. A time when Christ shall rule in peace no, war, nothing, a rest, a Sabbath, for one thousand years.

The Real Sabbath

The real Rest, the real Sabbath was still to come, but they could not enter in because of their unbelief. Keeping the Sabbath day is no guarantee of God's favour. Keeping the Word of God is. And Jesus Christ is the Word of God. (John 1 v1 & v14)

Paul says it best in Hebrews 4, (the Sabbath replaces the word rest for clarity).

1 ¶ *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his Sabbath, any of you should seem to come short of it.*

2 *For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

3 *For we which have believed do enter into Sabbath, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my Sabbath: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

4 *For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did Sabbath the seventh day from all his works.*

5 *And in this place again, If they shall enter into my Sabbath.*

6 *Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:*

7 *Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

8 *For if Jesus had given them Sabbath, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.*

9 *There remaineth therefore a Sabbath to the people of God.*

10 *For he that is entered into his Sabbath, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

11 ¶ *Let us labour therefore to enter into that Sabbath, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

And what is that Sabbath?

It is described in Isaiah 28

9 ¶ *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

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10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

12 To whom he said, This is the Sabbath wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

The Indwelling Holy Spirit adds precept upon precept. He speaks with stammering lips, the eternal truths through human vessels. The just live by faith led by the Holy Spirit that seals them so they no longer work (they have Sabbath) God works through them. These people do not try their own way they are led by the Spirit of God, they rest or Sabbath in Him.

ROMANS 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The Seal of God

Some people have claimed that keeping the Sabbath is the Seal of God. There is no scripture for this at all. However there is a Bible verse that does indicate what the seal of God is.

EPHESIANS 4:

29 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The Holy Spirit is the seal of God. As mentioned earlier the Holy Spirit makes us into new creatures, God living out His life through us. That is the seal; that is our Sabbath while we are here on earth.

Conclusion and Review

God rested on the seventh day of creation.

None of the pre Moses heroes of the Old Testament, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and many others are recorded as being required to observe the Sabbath day.

God initiated a Sabbath rest as a sign between Himself and Israel.

The Sabbath became one of the Ten Commandments.

The people of Israel, in spite of obeying the keeping of the Sabbath day, were refused entry to God's Sabbath because of their unbelief. There is a Sabbath day and another Sabbath.

Jesus talks of this Sabbath, or rest, in Matthew 11, calling people to Him.

The Jews killed Jesus principally because He transgressed the Sabbath.

Jesus death made us right with God, by faith in His sacrifice we gained access to heaven. What the Law could not do grace did for us.

A Christian is like Abraham, righteous through faith.

Water baptism in Jesus name invokes the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The indwelling Holy Spirit changes a Christian into a new person.

The old person dies and God again lives in flesh, our flesh. We rest, Sabbath, He does the work.

The early Christian Church quickly took to meeting on Sundays as recognition of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Jews, who stayed under the Law worship on Saturday.



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The conclusion is that neither Saturday nor Sunday are a legal requirement, but accepting the Word of God for our day, death to self and allowing the Holy Spirit to live through us is.

The Sabbath for this time is us allowing God's Holy Spirit to control our lives, we don't work, He does.

The Sabbath will also be the Millennial reign of Christ.

The Sabbath will be the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Yes we should worship God. If we believe the death and resurrection of Jesus has fulfilled the Law then Sunday is the ideal day for that worship.

If we believe we are still under the law, as do the Jews that rejected Jesus Christ as Lord of all, then Saturday is the day to worship. But that is not the Christian Sabbath