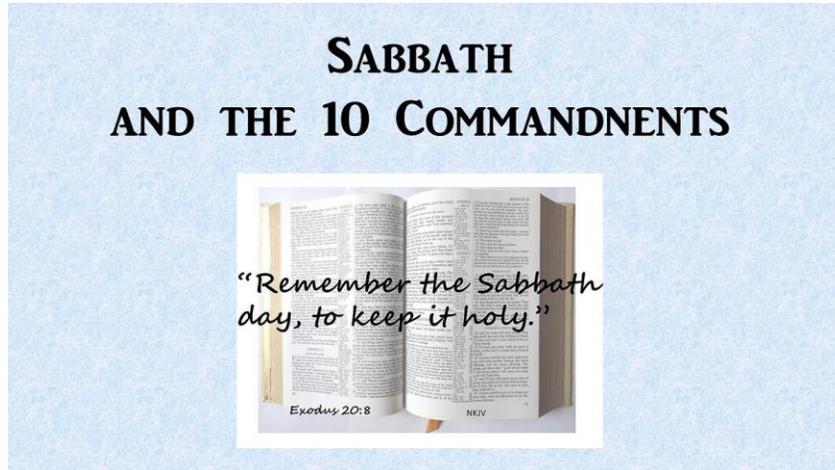


SABBATH



Introduction

The idea of resting on the Sabbath day was instituted by God at the time of creation. The important message in this lesson is that God established a Sabbath day for humanity. God also established the keeping of a weekly Sabbath day as one of the Ten Commandments. In this lesson, we will study the Scriptures pertaining to the Sabbath and try to understand what God has in mind for us regarding this holy day.

Why did God create the Sabbath?

first need to study the book of Genesis to understand why God created the Sabbath. God made all of creation in six days and declared the seventh day to be a day of rest. God did not need to make the seventh day holy in order to rest. God was not tired, but I am sure it took a lot of godly energy to create the heavens, the earth and everything on the earth.

Genesis 2:1-3....."Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."

The idea of God resting is also a symbol of completeness. God made the Sabbath not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of mankind. The seventh day of the week seems to be the basis for the frequent use of the number seven from Genesis to Revelation. We see the number seven is often used as a number signifying God's complete and perfect will. In order to make my point, I will simply give a few examples:

1. The first time after creation that God uses the number seven is when he states that anyone who avenges Cain will be punished seven times greater.
2. The number seven is used 46 times in Genesis alone. A bit of trivia would be how many of each kind animal did Noah take on the ark. He was told to take one pair of each unclean animal, but he was also told to take seven pair of each clean animal (Genesis 7:2).
3. Jesus had seven loaves of bread when he fed the multitudes.
4. On the other end of the Bible, the number seven is used 55 times in the book of Revelation. Indeed, the number seven is a constant reminder of the Sabbath.

Perhaps additional reminders of the Sabbath are found in nature. A woman's menstrual cycle averages 28 days. The moon rotates around the earth in roughly 28 days. Both these numbers are divisible by seven. Even more amazing is the fact that the earth revolves around the sun in 365.25 days. The closest single digit whole number to divide equally into a year is seven. That gives us our 52 weeks. I know of no scientific explanation why the moon's rotation around the earth, and the earth's rotation around the sun, would both be so close to the divisor of number seven. We have to wonder if all these facts are God's way of reminding us of the Sabbath.

We must keep in mind the Sabbath observance existed from the time of creation before there was a nation of Israel. We read in

Exodus 16:23 that Moses instructed the Israelites to observe the Sabbath as soon as they came out of Egypt. God provided the Israelites a double portion of manna from heaven so they would not have to gather manna on the Sabbath. Keep in mind, this all happened before Moses went up to Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments is part of a covenant from God. God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. The word "holy" comes from a Hebrew word meaning to set apart and to make something special. God felt that maintaining the Sabbath was so important that he included observing the Sabbath as the fourth of the Ten Commandments. In Exodus, chapter 19, we read that God told Moses that he will make a covenant with Israel. This was not just a promise, but a bilateral covenant that requires obedience. This covenant would come to be known as the Sinaitic covenant, and it stated the Israelites will be God's chosen people if they obey the Ten Commandments.

1. Exodus 19:5-6..... "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

a. This Scripture takes place just three days before the Ten Commandments is presented to the Israelites.

b. God's offer exists for eternity, but as history will show, obedience is the acceptance of the offer.

2. Deuteronomy 6:24-25..... "The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us that will be our righteousness."

a. God gave us the Ten Commandments so that we might always have prosperity.

b. God also gave us His laws so that we might be righteousness by following God's commands.

3. Exodus 20:8-11....."Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

a. We should notice that the Sabbath is "to the Lord." The Lord blessed the Sabbath and made it holy. To make something holy is to set it apart and make it separate from other things. The Sabbath is a day to worship God.

b. All of the Ten Commandments are to be obeyed. We read in James 2:10-11....."For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker."

God not only commanded the Israelites to follow his laws, but he wrote them in stone to signify their importance. It is interesting that in Exodus 20:8, the commandment about the Sabbath starts with the word "remember." The Ten Commandments are another way God constantly reminds us of the need to observe the Sabbath.

1. Deuteronomy 4:13....."He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets."

a. First, God commanded that the Israelites follow His commands.

b. Secondly, God wrote them in stone so man would not forget them.

c. Thirdly, not only did writing something in stone signify something of importance, but it signified a permanence of the law.

2. Exodus 31:17....."It will be a sign between me and the Israelites

forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested."

a. God specifically said the Sabbath is a sign between God and the Israelites. This sign is a notice that those who observe the Sabbath are God's people.

b. A fact that many people do not know is that God said the observance of the Sabbath will last forever.

Old Testament Observance

God established the Sabbath to benefit the Israelites. Moses relayed specific requirements from God on how to keep his Sabbath. The following Scriptures reveal to us how the Sabbath was observed in the Old Testament:

1. The Sabbath was a day of complete rest (Leviticus 23:2)

2. A person who worked on the Sabbath was to be cut off from his people, but a person desecrating the Sabbath was to be killed (Exodus 31:14). We are told in Exodus 35:3 that even lighting a fire in their home was a Sabbath violation.

a. Desecration was apparently a complete disregard of the Sabbath as opposed to just occasionally doing some form of physical labor on the Sabbath.

b. In Numbers 15:35, we see an example of God telling Moses to stone a man who was gathering wood on the Sabbath. We must face the fact that this decision was not made by Moses, but by God. We must also realize that God knew this man's heart. If this man normally observed the Sabbath, God probably would not have treated him as a person who was desecrating the Sabbath.

3. The Sabbath was a time to make animal sacrifices to God (Numbers 28:9).

The Sabbath is more than a time to rest and a time to worship God. The Sabbath is a time to meet with fellow Christians and worship together. Setting aside a day to worship together provides a time to build each other up and show a common love for God.

Leviticus 23:3.....“There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.”

1. We read in this Scripture that the Sabbath is a day of sacred assembly. This instruction means we are to meet together and dedicate the assembly to the worship of God.

2. God’s requirement for honoring the Sabbath applies wherever a person lives. The keeping of the Sabbath is not an ethnic custom, but a practice of the heart.

New Testament observance

Jesus never said any of the Ten Commandments (including observing the Sabbath) were no longer in effect. What Jesus changed, however, was the way the Sabbath is observed. Jesus practiced the spirit of the law and not the letter of the law as interpreted by the Pharisees.

1. Luke 4:16.....”He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.”

a. It was customary for Jesus to observe the Sabbath.

b. Jesus participated in the sacred assembly dictated in the Old Testament.

2. Matthew 19:16-19.....”Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, ‘Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?’ ‘Why do you ask me about what is good?’ Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.’

‘Which ones?’ the man inquired. Jesus replied, ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself.’”

a. In speaking about the law of the prophets, Jesus lists the final six commandments. (Jesus paraphrases the final commandment that states we should not covet anything that belongs to our neighbor.)

b. Why did Jesus not mention the Sabbath? Jesus probably did not

mention the first four commandments because he was addressing a man's question. The man apparently loved the Lord and was accepting Jesus, which meant he was obeying the first four commandments. Jesus wanted the man to concentrate on the final six commandments having to do with the treatment of others.

3. Some people will say that Jesus did not mention the Sabbath because we are no longer required to obey the Sabbath. If that were true, then we are not to obey any of the other three commandments, which he also did not mention. In other words, is it acceptable to believe in other gods and worship idols?

4. John 7:22-23....."Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath?"

a. Both physical and spiritual healing may be done on the Sabbath.

b. Jesus did not nullify the Sabbath, but he simply stated what could be done on the Sabbath.

5. Matthew 22:36-40....."Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'"

a. It is interesting that Jesus combined all Ten Commandments into just two laws. Perhaps Jesus wanted to make it easy for the Pharisees to remember. Jesus used verse 37 to combine the first four commandments together. All of these commandments had to do with loving God. The Pharisees, unlike the man in Matthew 19:16-19, needed to obey the first four commandments by accepting Jesus. Jesus then groups the remaining six commandments together that show us how to love each other.

b. By combining all ten of the commandments into two statements,

he included the fourth commandment (concerning the Sabbath) as a way to love God.

6. Read Matthew 12:1-8. This is a very interesting Scripture. It tells how Jesus responds to the Pharisees complaining that the disciples are picking wheat to eat on the Sabbath.

a. Jesus makes a point that King David and his companions ate consecrated bread in the temple, and that the priests work on the Sabbath but they are considered innocent.

b. Jesus tells the Pharisees that he is greater than the temple, and that he is Lord of the Sabbath. How can Jesus be Lord of the Sabbath today, if there is no Sabbath?

c. Jesus goes on to claim that if the Pharisees knew what Hosea 6:6 meant by "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," they would not have condemned the innocent. Jesus was teaching them that it is more important to do what is right than to just follow a religious sacrament.

d. After reading Hosea 6:6-7, we understand that Jesus was condemning the Pharisees not because they made sacrifices, but because they did not acknowledge the Son of God. More specifically, Jesus was saying the disciples were innocent compared to the Pharisees.

7. Read Luke 13:10-16. Jesus shows another teaching about the Sabbath.

a. Jesus again states in this Scripture that it is acceptable to heal on the Sabbath.

b. Jesus also expands on his actions by saying that it is acceptable to do good deeds on the Sabbath, which he also mentions in Matthew 12:11-12 by giving an analogy about a sheep that falls in a pit.

c. This idea of doing good deeds is often taken out of context to mean anything that is not sinful is a good deed and therefore the Sabbath is like any other day.

The Jewish people followed strict rules and faced severe

punishments regarding the Sabbath. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were required to make animal sacrifices to the Lord for forgiveness of sins.

Christ came in the New Testament to be a human sacrifice to end this practice. As we just studied, Jesus said, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." The apostle Paul explained this concept when he said: "But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

The Sabbath is observed by Christians even after Jesus's death. Many people believe that Sabbath observance ended when Jesus was crucified on the cross to usher in a new covenant. That is simply incorrect. Not only do his disciples continue to observe the Sabbath, but we will read that the Sabbath will be observed even in the end times.

1. Luke 23:54-56....."It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."

a. Even after Jesus's death, the Sabbath was obeyed by Mary and the women with her.

b. Mary was quite familiar with the teaching of Jesus, but she knew that Jesus taught the Sabbath must be observed.

2. Read Ephesians, chapter 2. Verse 15 is often used today to claim that Christ came to nullify the Sabbath because this verse says Christ abolished the law with its decrees and stipulations. The Sabbath is not in the context of this Scripture. This whole chapter is referring to ceremonial law and not to the Ten Commandments. As an example of what he is talking about, we see that Paul specifically mentions circumcision.

3. Acts 13:42-44....."As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed,

many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.”

4. Acts 17:2.....”As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures.”

a. The two Scriptures above show that Paul and Barnabas both observed the Sabbath by teaching in the synagogue.

b. We read also that their teaching was not just a onetime event.

5. Acts 16:13.....”On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.”

a. Acts 16:13 takes place in Macedonia. We see that even among Gentiles, Paul observed the Sabbath.

b. Paul not only evangelized in the synagogues, he actually observed the Sabbath by praying with a group of believers.

6. Matthew 24:19-20.....”How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath

a. It is implied that the hardships of the end times will make it especially hard for pregnant or nursing women. Because of the winter, it will be hard to flee to the hills and because of the Sabbath, some may be reluctant to travel.

b. Even in the end times the Sabbath will be observed. Note that there is no distinction made between the nation of Israel and other believers.

7. Hebrews 4:7.....”Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today...”

a. This part of verse 7 is used by many people to imply that the Sabbath is no longer in effect because we now are called to observe the Sabbath every day.

b. The idea that this Scripture nullifies the Sabbath is absolutely incorrect. This idea is incorrect primarily because the Scripture is

taken completely out of context. If we read both chapters 4 and 5 of Hebrews, we can understand the correct context. Paul is saying that even though God created the Sabbath, Sabbath observance is worthless unless this observance is accompanied by belief and obedience. Paul goes on to say that God said the disobedient Israelites who worshipped the golden calf will never enter God's rest. Paul explains that Sabbath worship alone does not give man a true "rest." Only by adding a daily faith to one's life can a person gain the true benefits of the Sabbath.

c. Hopefully, you now understand that this Scripture does not nullify the Sabbath, but tells how to make the Sabbath truly holy.

d. If Paul were telling Christians not to observe the Sabbath, then why did he continue to observe the Sabbath?

8. Romans 14:5-6

"One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God."

9. Galatians 4:9-11

"But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you."

10. Colossians 2:16

"Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day."

The above three Scriptures seem to be a compelling case for not observing the Sabbath. Before reaching such a conclusion, we must once again remember that Paul could not have been talking

about the traditional day of rest or Paul himself would not have observed the Sabbath.

Instead, these Scriptures refer to special religious holidays such as the new moon celebrations, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. These days were all called Sabbaths in the Old Testament. We notice, for example, in Colossians 2:16, Paul uses the word “a” instead of the word “the” to refer to the Sabbath. Paul used the words “a Sabbath” because he was not talking about the traditional day of rest. However, “the Sabbath” always indicates the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments.

I have counted 49 times that the word “Sabbath” is used in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Forty-six of these times the word “the” precedes the word “Sabbath.” The other three times when “the” is not used, “the Sabbath” is used before or after that verse to set the context of the traditional day of rest. Nowhere in Scripture does it tell us to no longer observe “the Sabbath.”

Isn't the Sabbath only for the Jews?

It is interesting that even in the Old Testament, the Lord promised to include foreigners from all nations as Israelites if they bind themselves to the Lord and obey his Sabbaths.

1. Nehemiah 13:20-22.....”Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. But I warned them and said, ‘Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will lay hands on you.’ From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.”

a. Gentiles were not forced to observe the Sabbath. Accepting God, unlike the Muslim belief, is always voluntary. The merchants were not brought in and forced to worship in order for the Israelites to

buy from them. However, their presence as a temptation to others would not be tolerated.

b. Additionally, just the idea that the sellers were lurking outside the city wall was repulsive to the Israelites. What businessman likes to have a salesman waiting on his doorstep before the business is ready to open?

2. Isaiah 56:3....."Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the Lord say, 'The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.'"

3. Isaiah 56:6-7....."And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings."

a. God says that God-fearing foreigners will be included in God's covenant with Israel.

b. Notice that it is considered a privilege to be counted as God's people—not a burden. By the same token, the Sabbath should be a blessing and not a burden.

The teaching of including all believers in the nation of Israel is continued in the New Testament. Colossians 3:29 states that all believers are seeds of Abraham, and that we are heirs of God's promise. We are told in Romans 11:19-21 that we are grafted into the nation of Israel. It is by belief, and not by blood inheritance, that we are part of God's promise to Israel. Just as belief has added some Gentiles in God's promise, unbelief has removed some Israelites from that promise.

How can we deny that we are part of the house of Israel when it was to the house of Israel that God made his promise concerning the coming Christ and forgiveness of sins? See Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ephesians 3:6, and Hebrews 8:7-13. Don't all believers share in that promise? We cannot pick and choose when we are included in the nation of Israel.

Jesus stated that the Ten Commandments (including the Sabbath) are for everyone, and therefore all Christians share in the promise that was part of that covenant. That promise was that we would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (people) if we obey these commandments. Any Scriptures that exclude Gentiles usually speak in specific terms. Such Scriptures often mention the nation of Israel as a geographic location or an ethnic entity rather than in a spiritual context. However, any reference made to the 12 tribes of Israel is usually meant in an ethnic sense.

Is the Sabbath on Saturday or Sunday?

There should be no doubt by now that we should observe the Sabbath, but isn't the seventh day of the week a Saturday? Yes, the Sabbath was always on a Saturday, the seventh day of the week, so why do we observe it on a Sunday? The practice of observing the Sabbath on a Sunday has no Scriptural basis. There is no place in Scripture that tells us Christians observed the Sabbath on a Sunday instead of a Saturday.

1. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Paul tells Christians to set aside money on the first day of the week (Sunday). Paul states that people should be "saving up" money to give to him when he comes. Since Paul probably preached to them on the Sabbath (seventh day of the week), he wanted to make sure the money was not spent earlier in the week.

2. Read Acts 20:6-7. This Scripture says that Christians met on the first day of the week to break bread. Therefore, many people jump to the conclusion that the Sabbath day was changed.

a. First of all, it would only make sense that Paul would want to eat with fellow Christians on the first day of his arrival.

b. Secondly, why did Paul plan on staying there seven days? He probably planned on staying seven days so he could preach on the Sabbath (Saturday) and not have to travel until the day after the Sabbath.

c. To believe that the breaking of bread equates to the observation of a holy day is absurd. Even if one insists on believing this day was holy, there is nothing that states the last day of the week is no longer holy.

3. Read Acts 2:46. This Scripture is mostly ignored by those who believe Sunday became a “Lord’s Day” because the disciples met on this day.

a. This Scripture reinforces the idea that breaking bread on a Sunday has nothing to do with the Sabbath. The Scripture reads, “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”

b. Not only did they break bread together every day, but they also met together daily in the temple courts.

c. Although many Christians do not realize it, the practice of Sunday worship was not made a formal practice until centuries after the death of Christ. On March 3rd, 321 AD, Emperor Constantine ruled that Sunday be a day of rest. This practice was then adopted officially by the Catholic Church a few years later at the Council of Nicaea. Constantine changed the Sabbath to Sunday partially because pagans in Rome already worshiped the sun god on Sunday. Since Constantine required all Romans to be Christian, history records many compromises he made to help pagans accept Christianity. The observance of Christmas (formerly a pagan holiday) is just one example of Constantine’s edicts.

However, there are also some writings that suggest Christians were celebrating the Lord’s Day (Sunday) as early as the second century. The important message to remember is that no matter what any historical writings say, the Sabbath day was never changed from Saturday in the Bible by either Christ or his disciples. It is an historical fact that a Sunday Sabbath was first made official by Constantine and the Catholic Church hundreds of years after the time of Christ.

Summary

We studied that God set aside the Sabbath as a holy day from the time of creation. It was given to all mankind and not just to the nation of Israel since Israel did not exist at that time. God made the Sabbath a holy day of rest and sacred assembly. The purpose of the Sabbath is to worship God and to rest from our everyday toils and concerns. Consequently, the Sabbath is to benefit man by helping him remember to set aside a day for himself and God.

The most important part of this lesson is the fact that Jesus never said or even implied that we should not observe the Sabbath. To the contrary, by not removing Sabbath observance from the Ten Commandments, Jesus intended us to observe the Sabbath. Jesus set an example by observing the Sabbath. Jesus's followers and disciples observed the Sabbath day as well as the apostle Paul.

What Jesus actually did was change the way the Sabbath was observed. The Sabbath was previously observed by very strict ceremonial laws given by God through Moses. The religious leaders of Israel made the rules even stricter. Over the centuries, these rules had gotten out of hand. Jesus said it is acceptable to take care of basic needs such as eating on the Sabbath. Jesus put things in further perspective by stating that it is acceptable to do good deeds such as heal the sick or even take care of animals on the Sabbath. Although the death penalty existed for such things as adultery and for breaking the Sabbath, Jesus appeared to remove this strict required punishment by the way he treated others such as the woman caught in adultery.

The Sabbath was not only observed by Jesus, but it was also observed by Paul after the death of Jesus. The Sabbath will even be observed in the end times.

Most Christians observe the Sabbath on a Sunday instead of Saturday, so what do we do? We need to keep in mind that the Sabbath commandment does not tell us on which day of the week to observe the Sabbath. It does tell us that one day in seven should be held sacred. One day in seven should be a day of rest and worship. Jesus always emphasized the purpose of a law as opposed to the letter of the law.

The letter of the law is that a person should be stoned if they do the slightest physical labor on the Sabbath. The letter of the law is that an animal sacrifice should be made on the Sabbath. There were also numerous other requirements that Jesus nullified during his ministry. The letter of the law is that we do not miss a single church worship service. The letter of the law is that the Sabbath was on a Saturday at the time of Moses.

The purpose of the law should be our focus. So what is the purpose of Sabbath observance? Scripture clearly teaches the following purposes of the Sabbath.

1. To set aside one day in seven to rest from our physical work and emotional stress.
2. To set aside one day a week to worship God. This can be a day of worship at church or a day staying at home and casually meditating about the goodness and greatness of God.
3. In addition to private worship, we are to have a consistent day of sacred assembly and Sabbath worship so the body of believers will have a sign to the entire world that God has made an everlasting covenant with his people.

Today, most Christians throughout the world observe the Sabbath on a Sunday. God probably prefers Saturday as a day for the Sabbath (assuming that the seventh day of the week did not change from creation to the time of Moses). It is my belief that God is more concerned about the three main purposes of the Sabbath.

Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for the benefit of man, so we have flexibility in achieving God's will.

However, do not be deceived; God's will is to have a regular day of rest and worship as a sign to the world that we are his people. It is the people who exchange making money for worshipping God who need to fear God. The people who work seven days a week or force their employees to disregard the Sabbath are the people who are the true Sabbath breakers. It is the people who treat every day the same that need to fear God. The people who have set aside the Sabbath solely for their own personal entertainment are also the true Sabbath breakers.

Nowhere in Scripture does God tell Christians not to observe the Sabbath, or to observe it on a different day. Sabbath worship like other requirements of God falls under his grace, but we should remember that James said all God's commandments are of equal importance. Therefore, both the murderer and the Sabbath breaker will stand equally before God, and that is a scary thought.

Review

1. Give at least three reasons why God created the Sabbath and explain the importance of each one.
2. Was the Sabbath originally given to Israel or to all mankind?
3. Which of the Ten Commandments did Jesus say that we do not have to obey?
4. Does Scripture tell us that a Sabbath breaker is different than a person who desecrates the Sabbath? What does it mean to desecrate something?
5. Factually, how did the church begin official worship on a Sunday instead of a Saturday? Why did this change happen?
6. What about doctors and nurses working on the Sabbath?
7. Describe your belief about the Sabbath now that you have studied this lesson.

