

## **The Sabbath Rest Test**

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### **Was Saturday Worship Nailed to the Cross?**

Perhaps the most common question we receive at Wake Up America Seminars (WUAS) is, "Why do you believe in worshiping on Saturday?" In fact, many people believe that WUAS is somehow associated with or sponsored by a denomination since we believe in the importance of resting on the Sabbath.

Immediately, some individuals respond by stating that a requirement to worship on Saturday was eliminated at the cross. They have concluded that denominations which worship on the seventh day of the week are legalistic. Regrettably, in many Sabbath-keeping churches today, an attitude of legalism does exist. However, from creation to the present, Satan continues to hide the universal principles established by God's laws.

In this short article, we cannot address all the reasons why the accepted day of worship was changed from Saturday to Sunday by the second century AD Christian church. Neither will it provide the reasons why the New Testament does not support worship on the first day of the week. (For an explanation of this subject, read chapter 5 of the book *Warning! Revelation is about to be fulfilled.*)

Instead, this article will focus on the perpetuity of the Sabbath and its role in end-time events. See if you can identify the concept of "rest" as you continue with this study.

### **The Seventh Day Sabbath Existed at Creation**

The Bible specifically states the seventh day of creation was blessed and made holy. "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." (Genesis 2:2-3)

No scriptural evidence can be found showing that the seventh day of the week is no longer blessed or made holy to God. The Bible specifically states that there were seven days of creation, not six days as many individuals presume.

If the seventh day was not a part of creation, we would have a six day, not a seven day, weekly cycle. The crowning work of creation was God's gift of the seventh day Sabbath to man. God blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy just as surely as the marriage covenant.

### **The Seventh Day Sabbath Existed During the Exodus**

The Bible says the importance of the seventh day of the week was renewed at the Exodus

when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. God said to the children of Israel from Mt. Sinai "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." (Exodus 20:8-11)

The only communication from God to man throughout recorded history worthy of being recorded on stone in God's own hand were these ten commandments. These tablets signified the enduring nature of God's law for all people, not just the Jewish people.

The Lord said to "Remember the Sabbath day" Have you considered why God said to "Remember" rather than "You shall not" for the fourth commandment? Could it be that God knew man would forget this one commandment and keep the other nine?

In discussing the fourth commandment, most contemporary Christians maintain that the requirement for keeping the ten commandments was eliminated at the cross. If this was the case, the same argument would exist for the other nine commandments. Yet, James 2:10-11 directly references two of the ten commandments. Using the same logic, if the necessity for keeping ten commandments was ended at the cross, then James could not have classified murder as breaking the Ten Commandments.

Another point of reference that indicates God's preference can be found when God provided manna for the children of Israel. He specifically directed them to collect manna on six days of the week, but on the seventh day, His people rested. Every week on the sixth day (Friday), God gave the children of Israel a double portion of manna for the sixth and the seventh day (Saturday). For nearly forty years, the importance of a Sabbath rest was placed before the children of Israel on a weekly basis. (See Exodus 16:29,30)

## **The Sabbath Day Was an Important Feast Day**

The seventh day of the week was also appointed as a feast day distinct from the other ceremonial days that were established for the Children of Israel. The observance of feast days are not part of the moral law documented by the Ten Commandments.

The observance of feast days, as established in the ceremonial laws, pointed forward to the redemption and salvation of Christ. The ceremonial laws were given to Israel in addition to the moral law that was imposed on all mankind. One difference between the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath of ceremonial laws was the temporary nature of the ceremonial laws.

However, more importantly, the Bible distinguishes between the seventh day Sabbath and the Sabbath identified in the ceremonial laws. Leviticus 23:3 states: "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." This seventh day "Sabbath to [or of] the LORD" was to be distinguished from Sabbaths of rest that were observed on other ceremonial feast days.

For example, the Day of Atonement was also considered a "Sabbath of rest." (Leviticus 23:32) However, it nor any other feast day was identified as a "Sabbath to the Lord." Every time the "Lord's Sabbath" or a "Sabbath to the Lord" is mentioned in the Bible, it always refers to the seventh day of the week.

## **The Pattern of the Sabbath in the Jubilee Calendar**

The Jubilee calendar was also established for the children of Israel. It again highlights the importance of a Sabbath rest. "The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. . . ." (Leviticus 25:1-4)

In this instance, every seven years the land was to receive its rest. Just as God's people need rest every seventh day, the land was to receive a year of rest every seventh year. Leviticus 25 provides a wonderful description of the Jubilee calendar. After seven weeks of years were counted, the fiftieth year was to be a Jubilee year in which slaves were to be set free, the land was to be returned to its original owners and family members were to return to their families.

## **Jesus Observed the Sabbath**

The fact that Jesus observed the Sabbath day cannot be disputed. Luke 4:16 states that "He [Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom." Although Jesus challenged the traditions of the Jewish leaders regarding worship on the seventh day, He never changed the day to worship.

In fact, Jesus called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath. "Then he [Jesus] said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. " (Mark 2:27-28)

Jesus is the "Lord of the Sabbath." He created man and the Sabbath for man. How presumptuous of man, to think he has the authority to change the appropriate day of worship to another day.

## **Apostles Observed the Sabbath**

An often used argument is that since the apostles worshiped on the first day of the week, we should also worship on that day. These arguments are addressed in the book Warning! Revelation is about to be fulfilled. However, when the New Testament is evaluated in its entirety, there is significantly greater support for worship on the seventh day rather than worship

on the first day.

In five verses, the book of Acts describes numerous worship services held on the Sabbath day (Acts 13:14, 13:42, 13:44, 17:2 and 18:4). The story of Lydia's conversion is one example. Paul and his companions had just arrived in Phillipi. Because Phillipi was a Roman colony, there were very few Jews living there. It was Paul's custom to preach in Jewish synagogues on the Sabbath day.

Often people contend that when Paul went to new city, he would preach first to the Jews in their synagogue on their day of worship. However, Acts 16:11-15 describes a different story. Shortly after their arrival in Phillipi, Paul and his companions went outside the city to pray. Notice that Paul chose a particular day of the week to worship in a city where there were few Jews. If they regularly worshiped on the first day of the week, they would have chosen Sunday as their day to worship.

The Bible is clear on this point, "On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer." (Acts 16:13)

Paul also met with believers in the city of Corinth. The Bible says, "Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks." (Acts 18:4) "Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God." (Acts 18:11) If the "Lord's day" was the first day of the week, it would be reasonable to expect Paul would strive with believers to convince them of their need to worship on the first day. The Bible's silence indicates this did not happen.

Perhaps the most important text regarding Sabbath worship during the time of the Apostles is Matthew 24:20. In this text Jesus says "Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath." Jesus is speaking to the Jews in Jerusalem regarding the future destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (40 years after His death).

If Jesus, as Lord of the Sabbath, intended for the day of worship to be changed to the first day of the week, He would have told His followers to pray that they would not have to flee on Sunday. Therefore, we have no alternative but to accept Christ's regard for the holiness of the seventh day. Nearly forty years after His ascension, He still expected His people to worship on the seventh day.

## **The Sabbath Test Is Critical to the End Time Story**

Let's face it. It is more comfortable in today's society to believe that it makes no difference which day we worship on as long as we worship God. If we say that it makes no difference which day we worship, then we have nullified God's declaration that we should work for six days and rest on the seventh.

Yes, the significance of worshiping on the seventh day has lost its meaning. However, as end-time events begin to occur, the issue of Sabbath worship will surface as a very important issue. The willingness of the children of Israel to rest on the Sabbath day, as well as allow the land to

rest on the sabbatical year, was a test of faith critical to their survival as an independent nation.

This type of faith will again be important in the end-time story. Here's why: God has established the importance of the ten commandments as His law for His people. (Matthew 5:17-19, 19:16-18, 1 John 2:3-4) The only people who will be saved in the final days of Earth's history will be those who obey God's commandments and faithfully follow Jesus. (Revelation 14:12)

The apostle John states that the dragon [Satan] is going to make war against the people of God: "those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus." (Revelation 12:17) The perpetuity of God's ten commandments has already been established. Keeping the fourth commandment requires faith. This illustrates an important lesson. If we are willing to live by faith, resting on the seventh day of each week, God will provide for our needs.

He provided for the children of Israel by sending manna and provided an additional year's supply of food for the Sabbatical year. He will also provide for us if we are willing to live by faith. The consistency of God is incredible. The final test for Earth's last generation will once again be based on faith and our willingness to trust Him and rest on His holy day.

## **What Day is the Sabbath?**

So, how do we know that the seventh day of Creation is the Saturday that we know today? The weekly cycle was established at creation. The seventh day was confirmed by God when He provided food for the children of Israel and again confirmed by Jesus when He was here on Earth.

The Jews have observed the seventh day Sabbath long before Jesus walked this Earth and they still do today. Sunday worship, on the other hand, was established by pagans who worshiped the sun before the birth of Jesus.

Although there have been changes to calendar dates, the weekly cycle has never changed. Surprisingly, Moslems, Jews, and Christians alike agree on the order and integrity of the weekly cycle. There have been a number of attempts to change the seven day week.

None of these attempts have been successful even though the weekly cycle is the only time period that is not based on astronomical movement. God ordained the seven day calendar week at creation. He expects us to worship Him on His holy day and He will not allow confusion to exist regarding which day is the correct day of the week to rest and worship Him.

However, both days (Saturday and Sunday) confirm the integrity of the weekly cycle.

Another point: Most evangelical Christians believe in a pre-tribulation rapture of God's people, leaving 144,000 Jews on Earth to finish God's work. But, what day do you think the Jews would proclaim as the appropriate day to worship?

Can you believe that 144,000 Jews, whose ancestors have observed the seventh day as their

day of worship for nearly 3,500 years, ever changing their day of worship?

## The Final Sabbath Rest

The exciting thing about the Old Testament is that it provides object lessons of many things to come. For example, the sanctuary service provides a representation of the penalty for sin (the crucifixion) and the consequences of sin (the final judgment). The creation week provides a pattern of six days (or years) of work and then a day (or year) of rest. The Bible has identified another pattern associated with creation week.

Consider this verse: "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." (2 Peter 3:8) Is it possible that God created a week of millenniums? If this theory is true, we need to test it against the Biblical evidence regarding time. Using the creation week as a template, a week of millenniums would require six thousand years of work for Earth's people and then one thousand years of rest.

Interestingly enough, the Bible chronicles a period of time totaling 7,000 years. The first six thousand years are identified through Biblical genealogies and the Jubilee calendar (See the [Grand Week Chart](#)). The final one thousand years of Sabbath rest are described by the apostle John. "I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. . . They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4)

The righteous saints are resurrected at the second coming of Jesus and the Earth receives one thousand years of rest just like the land was to receive a year of rest each Sabbath (seventh) year. Each time I study the integration of these time elements, I am again overwhelmed by the wisdom that designed this structure for us. There is an orderly function to everything the King of the universe created. He developed this tightly-knit time structure so our faith in Him can be renewed.

## The Final Jubilee

What happens when the seven thousand year period is over? First, sin is eradicated from the universe. Second, God creates a new Heaven and a new Earth for His people. Third, we will be forever reunited with Jesus. The Old Testament symbol of the Jubilee will be brought to fruition at the end of the seven thousand years.

We will no longer be a slave to sin, the land will be returned to the rightful owners and the family of God will finally be reunited. What an incredible, marvelous event — glorious Jubilee! Words cannot describe the emotions that will run through God's people at that time when they understand the endless love that God has revealed.

## Conclusion

The concept of Sabbath rest is one of the most beautiful concepts in Scripture. If Satan wanted to confuse mankind about God, what better method would he utilize than to challenge the day of

worship? God's moral code has been documented in the ten commandments.

Satan has been successful in causing us to forget God's moral law. Only one of the ten commandments, the fourth commandment, has been totally forgotten in the Christian community. Breaking every other commandment involves action on our part. The easiest way to challenge God's authority would be to disregard His law. God has designed the Sabbath rest test so our obedience to it will reveal the depth of our faith.

Do not let the legalistic view of some Christians ruin the gift that God created for His people.

The fourth commandment is the only one that tells us to "Remember" to do no action — only rest. Remember that we must walk the walk of faith. Remember that God's timing is symbolized in the seven day week and the Jubilee calendar. Remember the Sabbath rest test.

Remember the love God has for each person to give us a gift like this, so our faith may be strengthened before end-time events begin.