

Christian Behavior on the Lord's Day

by Guy Roberson

Should Christians treat Sunday, the Lord's Day, as just another business-as-usual day? While some activities on the Lord's Day are a matter of personal choice and conviction, we must not lose sight that this day is uniquely His. The Scripture calls it "*the Lord's Day*." It is His because He rose from the dead (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1-2) to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. John said, "*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*" (Rev. 1:10). This indicates this day is His personal possession, just as is "*the Lord's Supper*" (1 Cor. 11:20).

The Dutch have called Sunday, "God's Dike." In the Netherlands, the dike keeps back the threatening seas and, thus, preserves the Hollanders from watery destruction. Therefore, the Lord's Day holds back the raging waves of materialism, the minding of earthly things, and pleasure-madness that threaten to draw us away from the Lord and righteous living. Rubel Shelly speaks of the "enduring principle of the Sabbath." He said, "While the Sabbath commandment has no exact equivalent in the New Testament, its underlying principle is relevant to all people at all times in history. The critical truth embodied in the fourth commandment may be summarized this way: Our time is really God's time, and we must be faithful stewards in how we use life" (*Written in Stone*, p. 93-94). We need to realize that everything belongs to the Lord as well as our life: "*The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters*" (Ps. 24:1-2; Ps. 50:9-12; Hag. 2:8; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). This means that God is the owner of all the possessions we have and that we are only the stewards of them. This includes our body, our minds and even our time. Are we managing them the way God wants us to?

While the Sabbaths were days of rest and worship the Israelites became workaholics and did not enjoy them even though they went through the motions of observing them as "good religious people." However, they were anxious for them to end so they could get back to work cheating the people. "*When will the New Moon be past that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat? Making the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scales by deceit that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals—even sell the bad wheat?*" (Amos 8:5-6). Worshipping God was not their priority, merchandising was and profit was their god. Therefore, the Sabbaths were a burden to them.

How do we view the Lord's Day? Do we anticipate it each week, as time to put aside our daily concerns and focus on our relationship with our Creator? It is a time for public worship with the people of God and a time for families to be together and to strengthen its ties of love and companionship. The Lord's Day is a weekly gift to God's people and we need to realize that the observance of this day is not grievous (1 John 5:3). Jesus said, "*For my yoke is easy, and My burden is light*" (Matt. 11:28-30). In Isaiah 58:13-14 the prophet declared that Israel was not to pursue their ordinary plans of amusement on the Sabbath but to do the things which God required, and to consult His will in its observance and to call it a delight. Perhaps we should think seriously about how we use the Lord's Day and recognize what a delight it is to worship the Lord and work on our relationship with Him.

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