

Are Christians To Keep The Seventh Day?

by Bill Crews

Review

The word “*sabbath*” means “rest.” The seventh day of the week was blessed and hallowed by God and given to the Israelites (after they came out of the land of Egypt) to be observed as a weekly sabbath (Exodus 16 and 20; there were also annual sabbaths or days of rest in connection with the Passover week, the feast of Pentecost, the feast of Trumpets, the day of Atonement, and the feast of Tabernacles). The weekly sabbath was a day of rest, not a day of worship. The penalty for profaning that day was physical death. It was given as a sign between God and Israel and was to serve as a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. A “*shadow of the things to come*,” it was removed through the death of Christ on the cross. It was a part of the “*ministration of death*” which “*passed away*.” The weekly sabbath is no longer binding; the sabbath was **not** changed to the first day of the week; the first day of the week is **not** “the Christian’s sabbath.” Please read again the previous article in the bulletin of December 28th. Be sure to look up and read all the Scriptures cited.

When Binding & Upon Whom?

Prior to Exodus 16, prior to the time of Moses, there was no command to keep the weekly sabbath, no instructions on how to keep it, no examples of its observance by anyone, no one charged with failure to keep it, and no penalty for breaking it set or administered. Many sins are charged against Gentiles, nations other than Israel, but never breaking of the sabbath. From Exodus 16 on the Israelites were to observe the weekly sabbath.

Significance Of The First Day Of The Week

In Christ we have a new covenant and a new day (Hebrews 7:12, 18-19, 22; 8:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). That *new* day is the first day of the week, a day of worship rather than a day of rest. On the first day of the week Christ arose from the dead (Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1-2, 13-21; John 20:1-2, 19), the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles as promised (Acts 2:1-4; the day of Pentecost always occurred on the first day of the week — Leviticus 23:15-16), the gospel of Christ or salvation in the name of Christ was first proclaimed (Acts 2:22-40), the church of our Lord had its beginning (Acts 2:41-47), and Christians gathered weekly to worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Hebrews 10:25).

Arguments Made By Sabbatarians

Some arguments made by those who maintain that Christians (in fact, all people) must observe the seventh day of the week as a sabbath:

I. “Since the observance of the sabbath is described as ‘*perpetual*,’ ‘*everlasting*,’ and ‘*throughout your generations*’ (Exodus 31:16-17, e. g.), it must still be required of God.”

ANSWER: God, through Moses, was addressing the Israelites who had come out of Egypt, and the observance of the weekly sabbath is in this very chapter called a sign between God and Israel. Furthermore, the Passover (Exodus 12:4), the daily burnt-offerings (Exodus 29:42), the daily incense in the holy place (Exodus 30:8), the annual atonement (Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16:34), the washing of hands and feet by the priests (Exodus 30:21), the priests’ portion of the meal-offerings (Leviticus 6:18), the use of the shewbread (Leviticus 24:8-9), the fringes in the borders of their garments (Numbers 15:38), the covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14) and many other things are also described with the **very same language**; yet, sabbatarians admit that these were removed through the death of Christ.

2. “Jesus, God’s Son and our Savior, observed the weekly sabbath, and shouldn’t we follow His example?”

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