

#19

THE SABBATH – GOD’S SIGN OF FAITH

As we studied in a previous lesson we learned that the way of salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. Jesus’ perfect righteousness becomes ours only through faith in Him. God has given us a special symbol that reflects not only His Creatorship but also His special relationship with us. In this lesson we will explore what the Bible teaches on this very important topic.

1. Why did God bless the seventh day and make it holy? Genesis 2:1-3

Note: God blessed the seventh day so that it would be a blessing to His creatures, then He made it holy. In other words, God proclaimed the seventh day to be a special day to continually remind man of his beginnings, his roots. God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day. Notice the Jewish nation had not yet been formed. God created the entire human race at this time.

2. What day was mankind created? Genesis 1:26-31 _____

*Note: God created everything else before He created man. The creation of God was a gift to Adam. Adam celebrated with God in His creation by resting or keeping that day holy. Adam did not help God with creation. However, they celebrated **together** by resting on the seventh day. Notice that this was God’s seventh day but it was man’s first day. Man began his existence by **resting** in the perfect and holy gift of God’s creation.*

3. What significance is the Sabbath upon God’s creation? Exodus 20:8-11

4. Does God ever change His laws or covenants? Psalms 89:34 _____

5. Did Jesus ever change God’s law? Matthew 5:17, 18 _____

6. For whom did Jesus say the Sabbath was created? Mark 2:27 _____

7. What was Jesus’ relationship to the Sabbath? Matthew 12:8

8. On what day did Jesus die for us? Luke 23:52-56 _____

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Note: Jesus died on “preparation day” commonly referred to as “Good Friday.” Jesus completed our salvation, a complete and perfect work on the sixth day just as God as our Creator also completed His creation for us on the sixth day.

9. On what day was Jesus resurrected? John 20:1, 2 _____

Note: Jesus was resurrected on the first day or what we call “Easter Sunday.” Just as God rested on the seventh day after His complete and perfect work of creation, God as Jesus once again rested on the seventh day after His complete and perfect work of salvation. Just as God gave us creation as a gift once again God gives us salvation as a gift of which we had no work or effort in helping God with.

10. What day does the Bible call Sabbath? Luke 23: 54-Luke 24:1 _____

11. According to the Bible, what time does the Sabbath begin?

Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Leviticus 23:32

Note: According to God, evening and then morning constitute a day. The setting of the sun ushers in a new day to God. Therefore the Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday evening and ends at sunset on Saturday night.

12. According to the Bible, what does the observance of the Sabbath day also indicate? Ezekiel 20:11, 12, 19, 20

13. What did God want us to call the Sabbath? Isaiah 58:13, 14 _____

14. Did Jesus keep the Sabbath day holy? Luke 4:16 _____

15. What about after Jesus’ death? What day did the disciples keep holy? Acts 13:42-44 _____

Note: The same day that was Sabbath at creation is the same day we call Sabbath today. Any calendar will tell us that Saturday is the seventh day of the week. Any dictionary will tell us that Saturday is the seventh day of the week. If the Sabbath day had been lost between Moses’ time and Jesus’ time, Christ would surely have set the record straight. (See attached Royal Greenwich Observatory correspondence)

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16. Did Jesus think His followers would continue to keep the Sabbath after His death? Matthew 24:20 _____

Note: If God changed the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday why would He be concerned about the Sabbath 40 years after His death when Jerusalem was destroyed?

17. How did we start worshipping on Sunday instead of Saturday?

Constantine the Great who was emperor of Rome joined the church and became a bishop. He enacted a law that first enjoined Sunday keeping in 321 AD. _____

Note: The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday as a legal duty is a constitution of Constantine in 321 AD, enacting that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns, and workshops were to be at rest on Sunday, with the exception in favor of those engaged in agricultural labor.

Encyclopedia Britannica 11th edition, "Sunday"

*After this, other ordinances came in through human instrumentality. Most people today do not even realize that they are following a man made law first enacted in the fourth century. Is it any wonder that God said "**Remember the Sabbath?**"*

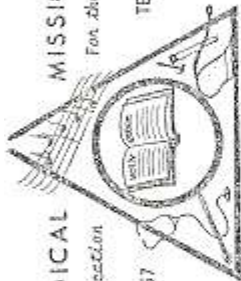
18. Is the Sabbath a blessing for us today? Hebrews 4:9-11 _____

Note: The Hebrew word "Sabbath" is translated into English by the word "rest." When we enter into God's rest by faith, we strengthen that relationship by keeping holy God's seventh day.

19. What does Jesus say we should do if we love Him? John 14:15 _____

Conclusion: The Sabbath is a sign to His people that they may know that it is He who makes them holy. Not only is He their Creator but Savior. We rest in the perfect and complete work that God has done for us. God did not alter or change the fourth commandment. In fact He says that if you love me, you will obey my commandments. He wants to have a special time with us each week so He can pursue a loving relationship with us. He longs to be our Savior and Friend!

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February 11, 1974

Astronomer Royal
 Royal Observatory
 Greenwich
 London, England S.E. 10

Dear Sir:

I am currently doing research regarding the unbroken sequence of the weekly cycle. Various European astronomers state that the weekly cycle has come down to us unbroken from ancient times: in other words, that the seventh day of our present week, for example, is identical with the seventh day of the week of Bible times. My question is threefold:

1. What does your investigation show regarding the unbroken antiquity of the weekly cycle from ancient times?
2. Have our changes in the calendar in past centuries (Julian to Gregorian, etc.) affected in any way the cycle of the week?
3. Is the Saturday of our present times the literal descent in unbroken cycles of seven from that Saturday mentioned in the Bible record of the crucifixion?

I greatly appreciate your time in answering these questions and look forward to your soon reply.

Sincerely,

Mark Finley
 Mark Finley

NF/wa



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Mr. Mark Finley,
 Mildwood Sanatorium and Hospital,
 Mildwood,
 Georgia, 30757,
 U.S.A.

Dear reference:

Our reference: 49/54

Date: 25th February 1974.

Dear Sir,

Your letter to the Astronomer Royal at Greenwich has been sent on to us here, and the Director has asked me to reply.

The continuity of the seven-day week has been maintained since the earliest days of the Jewish religion.

The astronomer may be concerned in the decisions relating to the time, the calendar date, and the year number. But since the week is a civil, social and religious cycle, there is no reason why it should be disturbed by any adjustment of the calendar.

Any attempt to disturb the seven-day cycle has always aroused the most determined opposition of the Jewish authorities, and we are quite certain that no such disturbances had ever been put into effect.

The change from Julian to Gregorian calendar (1582-1927) has always been made so as to leave the week-day sequence undisturbed.

The only known disturbance in modern times occurred in Alaska in 1867, when the territory was transferred from Russia, keeping the Asian days, to the United States, keeping the American date. A similar disturbance affects any traveller who crosses the International Date Line, and has therefore to advance or retard his date and weekday by one day.

Yours faithfully,

R. H. Tucker

R. H. Tucker,
 Information Officer.

RMF/MS.

ANSWER KEY TO LESSON #19

Q. 1- He finished His work and rested on the seventh day

Q. 2- Sixth day

Q. 3- The Sabbath is a memorial of God's creation

Q. 4- No

Q. 5 - No

Q. 6 - Man

Q. 7 - He is Lord of the Sabbath

Q. 8 - Friday

Q. 9 - Sunday

Q. 10- Saturday

Q. 11- Sundown

Q. 12- That our "holiness" comes from God alone

Q. 13- A delight

Q. 14- Yes

Q. 15- The disciples kept Saturday, the Sabbath holy

Q. 16- Yes

Q. 17- [see note]

Q. 18- Yes

Q. 19- Keep His commands