

Commandment # 4 - Honor the Lord's Day

Exodus 20:8-11

¹ The Fourth Commandment is to honor the Lord's special day. ²

This is found in Exodus, chapter 20, verses 8 through 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. ³

I. What Did This Mean to Them?

What did this mean to the Israelites living during Old Testament times? ⁴

What is the Sabbath Day? ⁵

It is our Saturday – the 7th day of each week. ⁶

It is a holy day. ¹ ⁷ Ezekiel, chapter 44, verse 24, emphasizes, **In any dispute, the priests are to serve as judges and decide it according to my ordinances. They are to keep my laws and my decrees for all my appointed feasts, and they are to keep my Sabbaths holy.** ⁸

The Jews worshipped on either a Friday night or a Saturday morning. Once I spent a month in Israel. I attended synagogue services each weekend with my Jewish friends. One of the services was held on a Saturday morning but the others assembled on Friday evenings. I remember young men standing at the window waiting for the sun to set signaling the beginning of the Sabbath Day. Worship began shortly after that signal. ⁹

The Law of Moses prescribed the death penalty for those who broke the Sabbath. ² Exodus, chapter 31,

¹ Exodus 20:8 - Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

² Numbers 15:32-35 - While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. Then the LORD

verse 14 says, **Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death.** ¹⁰

It was to be a day of rest from labor because the Lord rested from creation on that day. **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.** ³

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It was a day when no purchases were to be made. Nehemiah, chapter 10, verse 31, **When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day.** ¹²

It was a day to check yourself from doing wrong. Isaiah, chapter 56, verse 2, **Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.** ¹³

said to Moses, "The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp."

³ Exodus 20:11.

It was a day to be enjoyed and to celebrate because keeping it would bring special blessings. ¹⁴ Isaiah, chapter 58, verses 13 and 14, **If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.** ¹⁵

How did Lord Jesus define it? ¹⁶ During Jesus' time, the religious leaders made a burden out of Sabbath keeping. ¹⁷ So, what did Jesus teach? ¹⁸

1. You can prepare food and eat it. When the religious leaders confronted Jesus and His disciples because they were picking and eating grain on the Sabbath, He told them that He was the Lord of the Sabbath! ⁴ ¹⁹

⁴ Matthew 12:1-8 - At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and

2. You can teach people. Mark, chapter 6, verse 2, When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! ²⁰ The Apostle Paul also did it. 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. ⁵ ²¹ Again, As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures . . . ⁶ Again,

eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.” He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven’t you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

⁵ Acts 16:13.

⁶ Acts 17:2.

Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.⁷ ₂₂

3. You can serve the Lord and do good things. Jesus said in Matthew, chapter 12, verse 12, **How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.** ₂₃

4. It was not to be a burden, but to be a benefit. The Lord concluded, **Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.** ⁸ ₂₄

So, why do Christians worship on Sunday instead of Saturday like the Jews do? ₂₅

The Sabbath was a sign of the Old Covenant – the old creation. Exodus, chapter 31, verses 16 and 17 said, The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. 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

⁷ Acts 18:4.

⁸ Mark 2:27.

and rested. ²⁶ Again, we read, **For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.”** ⁹ ²⁷

The Lord’s Day is the sign of the New Covenant – the new creation. ²⁸

- 1. The Lord was resurrected on a Sunday.** ¹⁰ ²⁹
- 2. The Lord appeared to His disciples in the upper room on a Sunday evening.** ¹¹ ³⁰
- 3. The next Sunday Lord Jesus appeared again when Thomas was there.** ¹² ³¹
- 4. Pentecost – the birthday of the church, was on the Lord’s Day! Do the math! Fifty days from Passover Friday is a Sabbath. Since holidays were never celebrated on a Sabbath, they were postponed until**

⁹ Hebrews 4:4.

¹⁰ Mark 16:9 - Jesus rose early on the first day of the week.

¹¹ John 20:19 - On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them.

¹² John 20:26 - A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them.

the next day. When? Pentecost was on the Lord's Day - Sunday! ³²

It was the practice of the early church to meet on the first day of the week! The Apostle Paul was in Troas seven days so he could meet with the church on the first day of the week to have the communion service with them. Then, they worshipped together, and he preached. ¹³ Notice Acts, chapter 20, verse 7, On the first day of the week we came together to break bread.

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In First Corinthians, chapter 16, verse 2, it says, On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. The phrase "On the first day of the week" is used in both scriptures.

Why save money on the first day of the week? Because that's when the church came together to worship and to pass the offering plate! ³⁴

¹³ Acts 20:1-10.

II. What Should This Mean to You?

What should this mean to you? ³⁵

The Lord's Day is to be a day of privilege, not a day of obligation. Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 24 and 25, **And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.** You don't come together to worship because you'll get zapped if you don't! That's the Old Testament thinking. You come together on the Lord's Day because you want to express your thankfulness to the Lord. ³⁶

The Lord's Day is to be a day of personal rest and renewal. One of the purposes of the Sabbath Day was to provide physical and emotional rest. We need to have relaxation for our bodies and minds. You need rest or you get burned out and over stressed which leads to physical collapse and emotional breakdown. You need to follow God's principle of one day in

seven being a time to unwind and relax from your routine. ³⁷

The Lord's Day is to be a day of honor to our resurrected Lord. The Sabbath Day focused on the Lord of creation. The Lord's Day focuses on the Lord of resurrection and salvation. ³⁸

We come together each Sunday to celebrate, rejoice, remember and share.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper with thanksgiving because we have been redeemed!

This is a proper time to express our gratitude together as God's family!

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