

# It Is Written

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## How Should Christians Regard The Sabbath

*by Ken Weliever (Slightly Edited, DG)*

The 4th commandment simply says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Ex 20:7). First of all, it's important to remember the regulations, restrictions as well as the basis of the Sabbath. The text provides some insight.

"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:9-11).

Observance of the Sabbath has its roots in the Genesis account following creation. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Gen. 2:2-3)

Thus God instructed Moses that the Sabbath become a day of rest and worship. Even the animals rested. It was also a day for Israel to remember the Lord's work when he delivered them from Egyptian bondage (Deut 5:15). Specified animal sacrifices were offered to the Lord on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9-10). Furthermore, the Sabbath served as a sign of God's covenant with Israel (Ex. 31:12-17).

It's also important to note that violating the Sabbath was a serious matter. The death penalty was inflicted on those who intentionally broke the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14-15). In fact, Israel's disregard for the Sabbath was one of the reasons they were exiled into Babylonian captivity (Jer 17:21-27).

So, as we have briefly observed, the Sabbath was a uniquely Old Testament command. As we pointed out in our previous post, Paul affirmed that the "law of commandments" was abolished "through the cross" (Eph. 2:14ff). And the "bond written in ordinances" which included feast days, Sabbath worship and other Old covenant commands, was taken out of the way, having been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14-16).

Dr. D. A. Carson was right when he wrote, "We believe the Old Testament regulations governing Sabbath observances...are no longer in force, but have passed away along with the sacrificial system, the Levitical priesthood, and all other aspects of Moses' law that prefigured Christ."

The post-apostolic patristic writers, including Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, uniformly agreed that Christians worshiped on Sunday, the 1st day of the week, not Saturday, the 7th day of the week. Eusebius (A.D. 324), known as the "father of church history," stated that Sabbath observance does not "belong to Christians." On the other hand, he asserted that Christians "celebrate the Lord's day . . . in commemoration of his resurrection" (26,113).

The first day of the week, Sunday, is a uniquely God-ordained day under the New Covenant

- ◆ Upon the first day of the week our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead (Mk. 16:2).
- ◆ Upon the first day of the week, when He arose, He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:11).
- ◆ Upon the first day of the week He met with His disciples ( Jn 20:19-24).
- ◆ Upon the first day of the week He appeared to doubting Thomas causing Him to believe. (Jn. 20:27-29)
- ◆ Upon the first day of the week the Holy Spirit made a powerful appearance. (Acts 2:1-4)
- ◆ Upon the first day of the week Peter and the apostles preached the gospel for the very first time. (Ac 2:14-39)
- ◆ Upon the first day of the week over 3,000 responded to the saving message of Jesus for the first time and were baptized for the remission of sins. (Ac 2:38-41)
- ◆ Upon the first day of the week the church was born. (Ac 2:41-47)

◆ Upon the first day of the week Christians met to take communion—to remember Jesus, celebrate his life, reflect on His death and anticipate His return. (Ac 20:7; 1Cor 11:17-34).

By the way, the expression “Christian Sabbath” is a misnomer. The Bible speaks of no such day. New Testament Christians are not bound to the Old Covenant, including the 10 commandments and Sabbath day restrictions.

Today, God’s sanctified day of worship is Sunday. Let us not selfishly minimize or marginalize it. But weekly worship and honor Jesus on His special day.

## Galatians 2:20

*by Jarrod Jacobs*

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

A consistent theme throughout the New Testament is dying to self and living for Christ (Rom. 6:4-6, 12:1-2; II Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 5:24, 6:14; Col. 2:11-13; etc.). Paul’s statement in Galatians 2:20 reminds us of his focused goal to live for the Lord. Paul had spent many years persecuting the Lord’s church (Acts 9:4, 22:7, 26:14; Gal. 1:13; I Tim. 1:13). Yet, after he was converted, he became her most valiant defender (Acts 9:18-25; Phil. 3:8, 13-14)! It is clear that Paul did not consider his life his own. It belonged to the Lord because He had saved him from sin, and saves all mankind from sin through His sacrifice at Calvary (Matt. 20:28; Heb. 2:9).

In light of Galatians 2:20, let us examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5). Have we determined to be “crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3)? Does Christ live in us (I Jn. 3:23-24)?

We could ask where our mindset is (Col. 3:1-2). Are we interested in walking the “strait ... and narrow” (Matt. 7:13-14)? Or, are we only focused on self and the things we can obtain in this life (Matt. 16:26)?

When we are “crucified with Christ” it means we are separating ourselves from the “cares and riches and pleasures of this life” that pull us away from God (Lk. 8:14). It means we have a greater and nobler goal in mind. We are not living for the moment, but are living in view of eternity, just like those Old Testament heroes (Heb. 11:13-16). We want to make our lives right with God, as well as help others get right with God (I Tim. 4:16; II Tim. 2:2)!

Being “crucified with Christ” means we take up our cross daily and follow the Lord (Lk. 9:23-24). Paul described it another way in Romans 6. He showed us the blessings of being crucified with Christ. He said that in so doing, we can be “freed from sin” (Rom. 6:3-7). Therefore, not only does being “crucified with Christ” put us on the right path, and lead us to Heaven, but it has done so because when we die with Christ, we can be raised in the likeness of His resurrection and be “freed from sin”! Truly, the blessings are abundant in Christ (Eph. 1:3; Jn. 10:10).

Have you been “crucified with Christ”? If not, why not? What is stopping you from enjoying the greatest blessings on earth and then looking forward to the greatest reward man can experience? Be like Paul and allow Christ to live in you by following His commands and in love, be faithful to Him (Acts 22:16; Mk. 16:16; I Cor. 15:58; Matt. 22:37-39)!