

## What Does the Sabbath Look Like for Christians?

**Exodus 20:8:** (NASB) *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*



One of the Ten Commandments was to *remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy*. As Christians, we are always saying the Ten Commandments are still a necessary part of God's Law that we should observe. If that is the case, why do the vast majority of Christians have their "day of rest" on Sunday when the sabbath God set up for His people is on Saturday? Are we really saying to keep only nine of those Ten Commandments? Are we being too creative with God's word? What should we learn from the fact that there is no New Testament Scripture that officially moves the sabbath to Sunday? Is the "rest" for a Christian different than the "rest" referred to in the Jewish Law? Are Christians required to cease from all work on their sabbath?

### Why is sabbath rest SO important?

**Genesis 1:31:** (NASB) *God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

**Genesis 2:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.* <sup>2</sup>*By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He **rested <7673>** on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.* <sup>3</sup>*Then God blessed the seventh day and **sanctified <6942>** it, because in it He **rested <7673>** from all His work which God had created and made.*

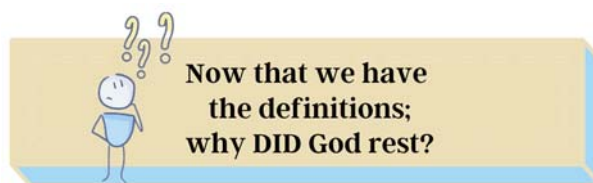
God rested - was He tired? Did He need a breather?

**Rest:** Strong's #7673 *shabath*; to repose, i.e. desist from exertion

Hebrew Lexicon: 1) to cease, desist, rest;

And God sanctified the seventh day:

**Sanctified:** Strong's #6942 *qadash*; to be clean (spiritually clean)



God rested to allow His work to continue, not because He was tired. Let's look at how the plan God put in motion was allowed to develop.

**God spoke to Moses regarding the tabernacle after he was given the Law:**

**Exodus 31:16-17:** (NASB) <sup>16</sup>*So the sons of Israel shall observe the **sabbath <7676>**, to celebrate the **sabbath <7676>** throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.* <sup>17</sup>*It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He **ceased <7673>** from labor, and was **refreshed <5314>**.*

**Sabbath:** Strong's #7676 *shabbath*; intensive from #7673; intermission

An intermission is an extended pause between two periods of activity.

*The sons of Israel shall observe an intermission to celebrate this intermission throughout their generations...*



Again, we see that God rested. Yet, there is an added description of God's activity: He was *refreshed* - this word **<5314>** can literally mean "to take a breath." It is not only used when someone is tired, but also when someone sits back and looks at their work with satisfaction.

Every year I have cords of wood delivered. They have to be stacked in sections and lined up properly, so they look even and don't fall. It's a long, tedious process. I'm exhausted when I'm done. After I've washed up and rested, I go out and admire the finished work. Are you saying that is what God did when He rested after the sixth day?

Yes, but there is more to it. *God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.* God's rest was also the anticipation of how the processes He had started would unfold and develop His incredible plan.

God sanctified (set apart) the sabbath day to make it holy.

### Previous context of Exodus 31:

Exodus 31:12-13: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>*The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>13</sup>But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.*

- ❖ The sabbath was for the sons of Israel to identify them with their God. (The sabbath connected them to God.)
- ❖ The sabbath was a generational arrangement. The people needed to be connected over and over again to God.
- ❖ The sabbath evidenced the fact of God setting them apart, sanctification. They were different than the other nations.
- ❖ Verses 14-15 speak of severe penalties for not keeping the sabbath.
- ❖ Verses 16-17 speak of the sabbath as a perpetual reminder of what God Himself did.



God established the sabbath as a crystal-clear focal point of rest and reverence.

The sabbath was God resting in His creative process and watching it develop.

We should pay close attention when God does something and then tells His people to do it as well.



## The sabbath was SO important and one of the Ten Commandments. Why would we not follow it?

The most important part of the answer to this question is to clarify that we DO believe in following the sabbath, but in a different manner. This suggestion cannot be taken lightly. In order for us to adhere to it, we need solid scriptural proof that plainly reveals why we can draw such a conclusion.

We do not want to say, "Christians have always had their sabbath on Sunday, so I will too." We need to understand the lessons and why it is a scripturally-sound approach.

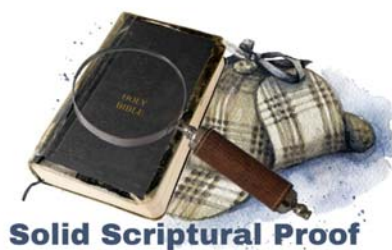
Let's take a look at some practical ideas for how Christians can observe the sabbath.

 One - relax, *Five Ways You Can Observe the Sabbath, Allen Parr, THE BEAT*

- *Number one is to relax. My friend, I've got news for you - you are not a machine. We can't just go and go all the time. To think that we can operate that way is operating out of pride. So, we need to take a day of the week, one simple day, and just relax. That means go get a massage, go and relax, maybe sit around, watch a movie. Our bodies need rest in order to function well. We know this mentally, but we don't practice it, and this is the reason why so many people are struggling with anxiety, depression, discouragement, low self-esteem, sleep deprivation and all these other things. If we are going to honor our bodies as a temple of the holy spirit, it starts with getting the proper rest.*



We do not want to take that out of context, but rest is important. If we do not take care of ourselves, how can we serve the Lord?



THE SABBATH  
was the leading  
part of the  
ceremonial Law.

The ceremonial Law was different than the moral Law in Judaism. The sabbath was the leading part of the ceremonial Law. Christians do not follow the ceremonial Law.

Leviticus 23:1-6: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, The LORD'S appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations—My appointed times are these: <sup>3</sup>for six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings. <sup>4</sup>These are the appointed times of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. <sup>5</sup>In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. <sup>6</sup>Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.



These days of *holy convocation* (of which the sabbath is one) were built to be times of rest – times of intermission to honor God. The seventh day was the original sabbath template and personally deeper than other sabbath times.

(Source: Bible Commentary by John Gill) It [is] the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings: other feasts were kept in the sanctuary, in the tabernacle or temple, or where they were; but this was not only observed there and in their synagogues, but in their private houses, or wherever they were, whether, travelling by sea or land.

The seventh day sabbath was very specifically within the confines of their own homes. No work was done of any kind. It was a solemn set apart to rest and reflect on God.



Two - reflect, *Five Ways You Can Observe the Sabbath, Allen Parr, THE BEAT*

- The second thing I want you to do is to reflect. I want you to take this time as an opportunity to reflect on your life. Think about where you are. Think about what things need to change; how things need to improve. How things need to get better in your marriage, better in your family, better in your relationships and also reflect on where you want to be in the future. Set some goals. Use that day to come up with a strategic plan to get you to where you want to be in life. So, you can use this day as simply a day of meditation.*



It is important to take the time to reflect, evaluate and improve our life. This is pleasing to God. Prayer is important, but we must also meditate. Meditating is listening for answers to the prayers given to our heavenly Father. We need time during our days to just pause and consider (*Selah* in the Psalms – pause and consider.)

There were several other sabbath times within the Jewish Law, all connected to its ceremonial aspects: the system of the sabbath days and Pentecost. Sabbath years - every seventh year and the 50<sup>th</sup> year of Jubilee. All times of rest, be it for the people or the land, were considered sabbath times.

Not using the land for the crops for a year helped the future crops. The land was able to restore itself. God knew what He was doing when setting up the sabbaths for the land and for the people.

For a detailed look at these, please see the Bonus Material.

**The Day of Pentecost was instituted as a sabbath time by God:**

Leviticus 23:16,21: (NIV) <sup>16</sup>Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD.

The Scriptures say to bring two loaves as a wave offering, seven male lambs, one young bull and two rams as burnt offerings, one male goat as a sin offering and two lambs as a fellowship offering.

<sup>21</sup>On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

The point was to do the work and then rest, reflect and honor God.





### Seventh month, first day:

**Leviticus 23:23-25: (NASB)** <sup>23</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup>Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a **rest <7677>**, a reminder by blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. <sup>25</sup>You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.

In the seventh month  
on the first of the month you  
shall have a rest... You shall not  
do any laborious work...



**Rest:** Strongs #7677 *shabbawthone*; from #7676; a sabbatism or special holiday

This was also a day of rest. It was not the sabbath, but it was a sabbath time.

Resting from hard work was also a health benefit for the Israelites. The land rested, the animals rested and the people rested.

Israel was given a model of God's rest to follow. It is like an intermission. They were to stop and rest.

Was the Day of Atonement the same as the seventh day of rest for God? No, it was a different sabbath. It was not the seventh day of the week. It is a clear picture that this was a sabbath day as well.

**The Day of Atonement was a sabbath (not a sabbath time), instituted on a once a year basis:**

**Leviticus 16:29-31: (NRSV)** <sup>29</sup>This shall be a statute to you forever: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall deny yourselves, and shall do no work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. <sup>30</sup>For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD. <sup>31</sup>It is a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall deny yourselves; it is a statute forever.



The rest required on the Jewish  
sabbath was established to  
enable a reverent frame  
of mind to prevail.

This was a necessary resetting principle and was  
driven by ceremonial cycles.

Sabbath was much more than a day. It was a recurring break in the stress of life and came up constantly.

**With such an emphasis on stopping and looking up,  
why did Jesus seem to challenge the system?**

Jesus did not seem to challenge the system; he outright sought to turn it on its ear! He did this because the spiritual leaders of his day who claimed to be representing God had completely undermined how the sabbath and the Law



were supposed to be carried out. They needed to be shaken up to see God's way. Jesus would correct this and then elevate it to another spiritual level.

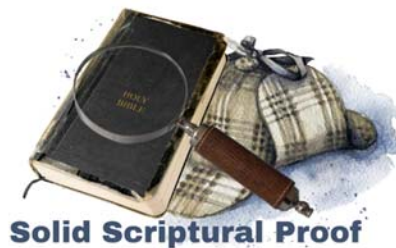
))) **Three - reconnect with God, *Five Ways You Can Observe the Sabbath*, Allen Parr, THE BEAT**

- *Now, the third thing I want you to do, which is going to be very hard, is to reconnect with God. Which, implied in that, means we have to disconnect from everything else. And what do I mean by everything else? Work, social media, and anything that is going to distract us from spending unhurried and uninterrupted time with God. I've got news for you; God seldom speaks to us whenever we're distracted. Whenever we got text messages coming in, we got comments coming in, we got emails coming in, we got voicemails coming and we got phone calls coming in. And yet we expect to hear from God. Use the sabbath day as an opportunity for us to push all those distractions away and simply reconnect and reengage with God.*



We need to spend unhurried and uninterrupted time with God daily. Reset and reconnect with God.

Our first scriptural proof showed us that Israel had several different ceremonial parts of the sabbath. Now for our second scriptural proof:



**Solid Scriptural Proof**

Jesus' objective for the Jewish Sabbath was to fulfill its requirements, to represent it as God intended, and to lay the foundation to elevate it TO A NEW CHRISTIAN APPLICATION.

**Jesus here reveals his mission regarding the Law:**

Matthew 5:17-18: (NASB) <sup>17</sup>Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup>For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

*Until all is accomplished* - Jesus fulfilled the Law as a perfect man. We will return to this this later.

Jesus established himself as the *Lord of the sabbath*, as he followed it with complete appropriateness. We will examine four points to help us understand how Jesus is *Lord of the sabbath*.

The first point shows the practical but lost meaning of the sabbath as a day to honor God, not to hurt men:

Matthew 12:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath, and his disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. <sup>2</sup>But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, Look, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a sabbath.





Jesus refers his accusers to the story of David and how he fed his men in what would have been an unlawful fashion. He also referred them to the fact that the Old Testament priesthood “worked” on the sabbath.

The sabbath was not meant to starve men; the sabbath was meant to refresh them. It is a day to honor God. We do not honor God by hurting men. The most important thing is for people to be able to stop, pause and honor God. Jesus was telling the Pharisees they were missing the point.

Matthew 12:7-8: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>*But if you had known what this means, I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice, you would not have condemned the innocent. (Mark 2:27 adds: The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.)* <sup>8</sup>*For the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath.*

Because Jesus is the Lord of the sabbath, the principle point is that it is a rest for the whole world. God wanted man to stop, look up and connect with Him. It was made for man to always be connected to God.



The second point shows the compassionate but lost meaning of the sabbath. It was a preserver and an enhancer of life, and not a dire and heartless requirement:

Matthew 12:9-14: (NASB) <sup>9</sup>*Departing from there, he went into their synagogue. <sup>10</sup>And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath? so that they might accuse him. <sup>11</sup>And he said to them, What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? <sup>12</sup>How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the sabbath. <sup>13</sup>Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand! He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.*

Imagine the tension in that moment, with the leaders asking if it was lawful to heal on the sabbath. Jesus concludes it was and heals the man in front of everyone.

We believe Jesus did most of his healing on the sabbath. The reason may be because the sabbath is the culmination of God’s plan - what Jesus told everyone to pray for - *thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven* - restoration! His healing was a picture of the restoration the figurative seventh day would bring them.



The third point: Jesus as Lord of the sabbath is teaching the mind of God regarding the Jewish sabbath. God’s rest was a result of the successful work He had done by the power of His own spirit. This was to bless humanity, the crowning touch of His earthly creation.

God wants to bless the human race. The healing Jesus did was a picture of that. The point is to bless humanity and connect them to the Creator so they can adore Him.

For more on the topic of the meaning of blessing, please search our archives for Episode 1123: Can Our Sins Ever Produce Blessings?



The fourth point: Jesus also taught what the sabbath rest would come to mean for Christians. The work of God’s spirit would bring restored life. We would be required to rest in this.



The verses just before Matthew 12 reveal a principle of Christianity not usually connected here:

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) <sup>28</sup>*Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Jesus says, *come to me...and I will give you rest.*

Matthew 12 begins with the words - *At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath...*

He talks to his followers about giving them rest and then physically shows what the sabbath or the day of rest is really about. He is saying: I will give you rest because I am the Lord of the sabbath. Jesus helped us understand that through him, our sabbath is truly fulfilled. He is the conduit for our resting in God.



This is why he healed on the sabbath, explaining it was a positive thing. It reflected on what the intention of the "rest of God" really was.

Jesus subtly but powerfully expands the concept of sabbath rest to resting in God's next phase.

**How did the apostles absorb and expand Jesus' sabbath teaching to the infant Christian church?**

The first thing we notice about the New Testament writings of Jesus' followers is the stark absence of ANY teachings on keeping the Jewish sabbath. With the majority of Christians destined to come from pagan backgrounds, the sabbath would have fundamentally dominated their instruction. If the sabbath is so important for Christians to keep, why wouldn't this have been mentioned again and again?



**Four - relate to others, *Five Ways You Can Observe the Sabbath*, Allen Parr, THE BEAT**

- *The fourth thing that I want you to do is to use this opportunity as a time to relate to other people. In other words, spend time investing in the relationships that God has given you. Whether that may be friendships. Whether that may be an opportunity to spend time with your spouse or your children or other family members or whatnot, but this is an opportunity for us to say, you know what, I'm not going to be focused at this point on getting a*





*task done and checking something off my checklist. No, I'm going to be fully engaged and fully present in this relationship so that I can give everything I have to relating to other people. I know it's very difficult because you've got all these different things that are competing for your time, but if we could just disengage from these other things then we can have true fellowship and community with other people.*

The point is to pull away from all of the other things that get in the way of the most important thing - loving and honoring God. We do that by loving and honoring those around us.

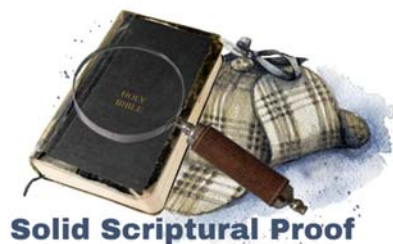
**Jesus has just shown us the fulfillment of what the rest of sabbath would ultimately represent.**

Revelation 13:8: (KJV) *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the beast), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb (Jesus) slain from the foundation of the world.*



**How was Jesus slain from the foundation of the world if he did not die until 2,000 years ago? It was in the mind of God even before creation.**

We are supposed to rest in God's plan. If it was in God's mind, it was in His plan.



**Solid Scriptural Proof**

The New Testament writers clearly and emphatically build on the principles of this higher meaning of rest –  
**THE SABBATH FOR CHRISTIANS.**

The meaning of sabbath for Christians is not sabbath *day* as much as it is sabbath *rest*.

**The Apostle Paul makes a pretty emphatic statement about the sabbath as a part of the obsolete ceremonial Law:**

Colossians 2:16-17: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>*Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath day - <sup>17</sup>things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.*

Paul was telling the Christians who came from pagan backgrounds not to let others judge them regarding their food and their drink, or in respect to Jewish festivals, a new moon (a lot of Jewish rituals were built around the moon), or sabbath day. Those things were mere shadows of what was to come. The Law and all of its ceremony was to lead to Christ. A shadow leads to the real person.



Only when light is shining does it reveal the shadow and then leads us to the reality. Where there is no light, there is no shadow.



**The Law and all of its ceremony led to Christ - the real thing, as a shadow leads to the real person.**

Ephesians 1:9-10: (ASV) <sup>9</sup>*making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him* <sup>10</sup>*unto a **dispensation** <3622> (administration) of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth; in him...*

Remember when Jesus said the Law would stand until all was accomplished? We rest in recognition of Jesus as THE centerpiece of God's plan. That is the new administration.

When we think about administrations, we think about politics. It is how the times are governed. The time of reconciliation in God's kingdom will be under a new, future administration which is Christ and his faithful ones governing from heaven over the whole world. The present administration for Christians is different than the previous administration which was under the Law. We need to follow God's will through the different timeframes.

Paul gave us clear guidance regarding worship, the sabbath and ceremonies.

**We are called a "new creation," which was in place before the foundation of the world but was only realized after Jesus' faithful sacrifice and during the seventh day in which God rested:**

2 Corinthians 5:17-18: (NASB) <sup>17</sup>*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* <sup>18</sup>*Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

**God called out a new creation - a heavenly calling - for the purpose of the ministry of reconciliation.**

As Israel was temporarily reconciled by ceremony and sacrifice, needing the Day of Atonement repeated every year, we are reconciled by Christ, but only need to have this done once. When it said *old things passed away* - even the Jewish Law passed away for the Christian; it went from the letter of the Law to the spirit of the Law. The ceremonial Law ended because it was no longer needed, but the moral Law is still in place. Jesus raised the standard.

For more on this topic, please search our archives for Episode 1084: Does the Old Testament Law Apply to Me?



**When we look at any aspect of the moral Law we always see the same thing - Jesus upholds and enhances all of it.**

**Paul again alludes to our sabbath NOT needing to be a *specific* day. There is a new way for the Christian to look at the sabbath - a sabbath rest:**

Romans 14:5-6,9: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>*One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.* <sup>6</sup>*He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord...* <sup>9</sup>*For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

Paul recognized and respected the Jewish Christians' attachment to the ceremonial Law. He gave them time and space to grow. This is a great lesson for us in relation to treating our brethren with kindness and respect.



The Day of Pentecost was a day for Jewish resting in God. They rested in the fact that His spirit had formed that which was *very good* and caused God Himself to rest from creation. The day God chose to give the holy spirit to Christianity was the day of Pentecost. He was now giving that same spirit to a whole "new creation" of Jesus' followers, which was also "very good," previously not revealed although part of God's plan.

This new creation was already a part of God's plan. On one of those days of sabbath resting (the Day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was given to the Christians), God revealed another part of His plan.

We look at the sabbath through Christian eyes and not Jewish eyes because of the work of Jesus.



The rest of the Jewish sabbath was based on God's rest from His earthly creation.

The rest for the Christian is based upon God's rest from establishing His earthly to spiritual creation.

The differences in the Christian sabbath perspective are clear. We need to take Christian sabbath rest seriously.

**What does a "sabbath rest" look like for a Christian?  
Should it be every Sunday? Does it matter?**

There absolutely is a sabbath rest for Christians, and as we have already seen, it is defined differently than the Jewish sabbath. The proven concept of a "sabbath day" should not be cast aside lightly, though the application is different. Let's look at the "*why*" of our rest to find the "*how*" of our rest. Our focus should be on resting in God's eternal providence.

**Joshua took over for Moses to bring the people into the Promised Land, but they did not fully enter the "rest" of God because they were disobedient:**

Hebrews 4:8-11: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>For if Joshua had given them rest, He (God) would not have spoken of another day after that. <sup>9</sup>So there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God. <sup>10</sup>For the one who has entered his rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. <sup>11</sup>Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.



The King James translation says, *labor into rest* rather than *be diligent to enter that rest*. It takes work to enter His rest. This sounds like a contradiction! However, the only rest worth entering is one we get to by our labor. To enter into the rest of God, we need to work at laying aside our own perspectives, replacing them with utter faith and REST IN GOD'S ETERNAL



PROVIDENCES. It is not a contradiction but a valuable investment of time and effort. We *want* to labor to enter into God's rest.

How do we enter into God's rest? We focus on what God has done, what God is doing and what God will do:

Hebrews 4:3: (NASB) *For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, as I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

Paul is reminding us that the Jewish people did not enter into God's rest. Remember, God had put the processes to carry out His plan in place before the world was and He was letting them develop. God's plan is perfect. Though God's *works were finished*; they had not all yet been revealed. All the principles were in place, but the Jewish nation was not able to see them because it was not yet time.

 **Five - rejoice, remember, recall, *Five Ways You Can Observe the Sabbath*, Allen Parr, THE BEAT**

- *And the fifth and final thing you can do on this day is to rejoice or to remember or to recall. And the idea here is to just take some time and just think about what God has done in your life, and how He's blessed you and how good He's been to you. And just simply say, "God, I rejoice today. I thank you that I have a roof over my head. I thank you that my children are safe. I thank you, God, that I have a job. I thank you, God, that my business is doing well." And just take this time to recount the blessings that God has given you and just worship and praise God and rejoice to God for His goodness over your life.*

Let's add a few points to this. What if things are not going well? Does that mean we cannot rejoice? No, it means that we acknowledge God in prayer that we are going through some very hard experiences. We need to thank God that His providences are over our families and us, especially in the difficult times. We know we will get through this and will learn and grow from the experiences. We may not yet see how, it may look impossible, but we can be certain God knows how He will take us through to the other side.

We have *rest* in the fact that the plan of God, from the beginning, had salvation and life as its very basis. This means for you, your family and your loved ones.

We mentioned before that though there were many things the Jews saw about God's plans, there were other things they did not see because it was not time for them to be revealed. *Before the foundation of the world*, even before mankind was created, these plans existed in the mind of God. Whatever exists in the mind of God is as good as done.

There are three things beyond what the Jewish nation knew that we have to add to *our rest* as Christians:





1

### First, the ransom price for Adam was already in order:

1 Peter 1:19-20: (KJV) <sup>19</sup>*But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: <sup>20</sup>who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,*

Peter is saying that before the world was created, the price for sin was arranged. God knew man would sin, and He prepared for it. In the mind of God, the price was already paid. We know the price was paid 2,000 years ago when Jesus died, but it was in God's mind eons ago.



*Rest in the PAST payment of the ransom. It brought forgiveness of our sins.*

Please see our CQ Kids video: [Why Did Jesus Have to Die?](#)

God rested in His own providence, knowing He had provided for this. We need to also rest in His providence with confidence, knowing He has provided for us.

2

### Second, the calling of the true followers of Jesus was already in order:

Ephesians 1:4: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him, in love.*

*He chose us* - the "us" is not talking about us as individuals; it is talking about the collective call of the body of Christ. During the creative process, God had this group already chosen to be the body and bride of Christ. He predetermined a group or class of people (not the actual individuals) that would become this body. Again, we need to rest in the providence of God because He rested in His providences or preparations, knowing His plan would work out in the end.

*Rest in the PRESENT privilege of God's individual call to follow Jesus.*

3

### Third, the redemption of the world was already in order:

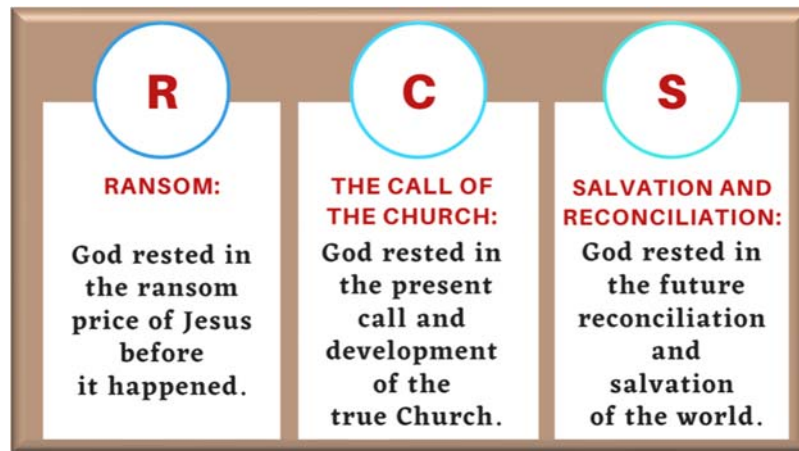
Matthew 25:33-34: (KJV) <sup>33</sup>*And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

When God *looks upon His creation and behold, it is very good, and God rested*, not only was the physical creation *very good*, but God was also satisfied that the processes He put into place would unerringly unfold. He knew the world would be saved and redeemed. He had confidence, and therefore could rest in His providences being fulfilled.

*Rest in the FUTURE reconciliation and salvation of the world.*

Satan stopped God's plan and is in control, right? NO! Satan NEVER had control. God permitted him to do what he did for an everlasting lesson for mankind. Satan never has control beyond what God allows.

God's plan is so comprehensive that to rest in His providence is to rest in its foreordained conclusion. That is how we enter into God's rest. We look at how His plans have been accomplished, and how the future plans roll out. We know God has got this!



We can rest in these also. This is a powerful way for us to celebrate sabbath.

The early Christian church chose Sunday - the first day of the week - as a day to gather, study, reflect, pray and praise.

**The early church gave us guidance to worship on Sundays.**

Revelation 1:10: (NASB) *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.*

It was resurrection day, the Lord's day, the day Jesus was raised, the day that unfolded God's previously unknown plan. Everything was revealed when Jesus was raised. This was the fulfillment of justice, the physical evidence, the surety that God's plan is moving forward. The early church recognized this and called it *the Lord's day*.

**The early church met on the first day of the week (Sunday):**

Acts 20:7: (NASB) *On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.*

When we perpetuate the meeting on the first day of the week, we are meeting on the day that represents the resurrection of Jesus. This represents life, the entire plan of God.

1 Corinthians 16:2: (NASB) *On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.*

Paul was preparing to visit and asked the Corinthians to collect for needy brethren (not for Paul himself) before he got there so that they could spend the time in study. Paul would take that collection back to Jerusalem.



For me, sabbath is the ability to just stop. I try to take little sabbaths along the way. Often when I am working on something and I get stuck, I take a sabbath. I get up, walk away and do something else. I try and rest my mind. I work on Sunday mornings leading Bible studies, and Sunday afternoon I take time for family.



Christian sabbath rest is necessary. It is not just about our physical activities.

It centers on focusing and refocusing our spiritual mind.  
A day of rest is ideal. Pause, reflect, pray and revitalize.

Christian sabbath is not bound by the confines of a day or a ceremony. It is not controlled by physical cycles of the earth. Christian rest is based upon the life-altering gift of Jesus as our ransom. It is built upon God calling us to follow in Jesus' sacrificial footsteps, which simply means we are privileged to be about our Father's business. Our rest is celebrated in the begetting of God's own spirit - His own power and influence dwelling in us and working through us. Each day that we take these gifts and center them in our life is a day of rest. It is all about Jesus and all about life, put in place *before the foundation of the world*. This is the providence of God that Jesus rested in, and what we should rest in.

*So, what does the sabbath look like for Christians?  
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on June 1, 2020  
Ep. 1128: Is Obedience More Important Than Sacrifice?

### Bonus Material and Study Questions

*Rest time is not waste time. It is economy to gather fresh strength... It is wisdom to take occasional furlough. In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less.*  
— Charles Spurgeon



We rest in God's providence every day. That is living the sabbath. Looking for God's will and not ours, is resting in Him. *In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths.* Daily asking God for forgiveness, knowing He forgives us, gives us rest and keeps us in harmony with Him. It also helps me to create time and space to focus and meditate on the Lord.

### The original sabbath Commandment:

Exodus 20:8-11: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

### The Day of Pentecost instituted as a sabbath by God (fully quoted here):

Leviticus 23:16-22: (NIV) <sup>16</sup>Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. <sup>17</sup>From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. <sup>18</sup>Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings - an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. <sup>19</sup>Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. <sup>20</sup>The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest. <sup>21</sup>On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. <sup>22</sup>When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.

### The Day of Atonement was a sabbath, instituted on a once a year basis:

Leviticus 16:29-34: (NRSV) <sup>29</sup>This shall be a statute to you forever: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall deny yourselves, and shall do no work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. <sup>30</sup>For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD. <sup>31</sup>It is a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall deny yourselves; it is a statute forever. <sup>32</sup>The priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the linen vestments, the holy vestments. <sup>33</sup>He shall make atonement for the sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. <sup>34</sup>This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the people of Israel once in the year for all their sins. And Moses did as the LORD had commanded him.

**Atonement:** Strong's #3722 *kaphar*; to cover (specifically with bitumen); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel

King James Version translates this word: appease, make (an atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, reconcile

Genesis 6:14: (KJV) Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt **pitch <3722>** it within and without with pitch.

Exodus 30:10: (KJV) And Aaron shall make an **atonement <3722>** upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make **atonement <3722>** upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.





Exodus 30:15: (KJV) *The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an **atonement** <3722> for your souls.*

Hebrews 10:4-6: (NRSV) *<sup>4</sup>For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. <sup>5</sup>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; <sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.*

### The seventh-year sabbath instituted by God:

Leviticus 25:1-7: (NIV) *<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, <sup>2</sup>Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup>For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. <sup>4</sup>But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. <sup>5</sup>Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. <sup>6</sup>Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you- for yourself, your manservant and maidservant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, <sup>7</sup>as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.*

Leviticus 25:20-22: (NIV) *<sup>20</sup>You may ask, what will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops? <sup>21</sup>I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. <sup>22</sup>While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.*

### The 50<sup>th</sup>-year Jubilee instituted as a sabbath by God:

Leviticus 25:8-19: (NIV) *<sup>8</sup>Count off seven sabbaths of years--seven times seven years--so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup>Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. <sup>10</sup>Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. <sup>11</sup>The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. <sup>12</sup>For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. <sup>13</sup>In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property. <sup>14</sup>If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other. <sup>15</sup>You are to buy from your countryman on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And he is to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. <sup>16</sup>When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what he is really selling you is the number of crops. <sup>17</sup>Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God. <sup>18</sup>Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. <sup>19</sup>Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety.*

### Various Scriptures relating to the sabbath and the New Testament:

Acts 15:19-21: (NASB) *<sup>19</sup>Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, <sup>20</sup>but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. <sup>21</sup>For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every sabbath.*

Hebrews 3:14-19: (NASB) *<sup>14</sup>For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, <sup>15</sup>while it is said, today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked me. <sup>16</sup>For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.*



**Hebrews 4:15-16:** (NASB) <sup>15</sup>*For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**Mark 2:23-28:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>*And it happened that he was passing through the grainfields on the sabbath, and his disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. <sup>24</sup>The Pharisees were saying to him, Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath? <sup>25</sup>And he said to them, Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; <sup>26</sup>how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him? <sup>27</sup>Jesus said to them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. <sup>28</sup>So the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath.*

**Luke 13:10-16:** (NASB) <sup>10</sup>*And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. <sup>11</sup>And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. <sup>12</sup>When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, Woman, you are freed from your sickness. <sup>13</sup>And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. <sup>14</sup>But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the sabbath day. <sup>15</sup>But the Lord answered him and said, You hypocrites, does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him? <sup>16</sup>And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the sabbath day?*

(Source: J Vernon McGee: Commentary on Leviticus 23) If you will notice, as we go through this book, God always directs His instructions to certain people, and it is well to note the ones to whom He is directing the instructions. He tells Moses as the lawgiver, and he in turn is to tell the people. Even though the feasts will involve the tabernacle, the priests are not specifically mentioned. The people were to come together, and the feasts were to fit into the yearly calendar of Israel.

Passover — the crucifixion and death of Christ

Unleavened Bread — the fellowship we have with Christ because of His death

Firstfruits — the resurrection of Christ

Pentecost — the beginning of the church

Trumpets — Israel brought back into the land (future)

Great Day of Atonement — the work of Christ upon the Cross for us

Tabernacles — the time when Israel is in the land (future)

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# Study QUESTIONS

## Ep. 1127: What Does the Sabbath Look Like for Christians?

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1127-sabbath/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**  
SHOW NOTES

1. What was the purpose of the sabbath and why was it so important in the Old Testament? (See Genesis 1:31, 2:1-3, Exodus 31:12-17)
2. Why is it less important for Christians to follow the sabbath in the same way Israel did? (See Leviticus 23:1-6)
3. What were some other sabbath times instituted by the Jewish Law? How can we incorporate sabbath times in our Christian lives? (See Leviticus 23:16-25)
4. What was Jesus' objective for the Jewish sabbath? How was he "Lord of the Sabbath"? (See Matthew 11:28-30, 12:1-2, 7-14, Mark 2:27)
5. What was the Apostle Paul's perspective of the sabbath's importance to Christians? Why? (See Colossians 2:16-17, Ephesians 1:9-10)
6. What are the differences between Jewish sabbath and Christian sabbath rest? (See 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Romans 14:5-6, 9)
7. What are some practical things we can do during our Christian sabbath rest?
8. How do we enter into God's rest? (See Hebrews 4:3, 8-11)
9. What benefits do Christians today have to aid our rest that the Jewish nation did not have in the Old Testament? (See 1 Peter 1:19-20, Ephesians 1:4, Matthew 25:33-34)
10. Why did early Christians choose to gather on Sundays? (See Revelation 1:10, Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2)
11. Do you observe the sabbath or sabbath rests? If so, what do you do? If not, why not?