##### **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**Lesson 7 - The Fourth Commandment: A Holy Day (Part 2)**

**Exodus 20:8-11**

**Introduction:** That there is to be a day of rest from the normal labors of life is a matter settled with relative ease. God set the example when He rested from His creative work on the seventh day. Even before the law was given at Sinai, Israel was to gather manna in the wilderness for six days. On the sixth day, they were to gather enough for the seventh and gather no manna on the Sabbath. Then, of course, here we are in the Ten Commandments, and the finger of God writes on tables of stone, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

To some people, the word “Sabbath”means “seventh.” However, the word does not at all imply a number, but “*rest.”* In fact, there were special times in the Jewish year when there would be several Sabbaths in a seven-day period.

In this lesson we are going to discuss an oft-ignored subject. If we do not observe the seventh day (Saturday) Sabbath, why not? And if we observe the first day of the week (Sunday) as a sort of “Christian Sabbath,” why do we do so?

# i. EXODUS 31:12-17 THE seventh DAY SABBATH WAS A SIGN BETWEEN GOD AND ISRAEL

## A. God had entered into a covenant with Israel (Exodus 19), and the Ten Commandments are the terms of the covenant.

### 1. This was a covenant of obedience.

### 2. In Exodus 19:8, Israel said they would do all God commanded.

### 3. It is then that God called Moses into Mount Sinai and gave him the commandments, the terms of the agreement or covenant.

## B. God gave special attention to the fourth commandment.

### 1. V13 Speak to whom? Israel.

### 2. V13 It is a sign between whom? “Me (God) and you (Israel).”

### 3. V16 Who is to keep the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant? The children of Israel.

### 4. V17 It is a sign between God and whom forever? The children of Israel.

**C.** **This should be understood before any serious discussion about New Testament saints being bound to the observance of the seventh day.**

# ii. HOW DID THE first DAY OF THE WEEK BECOME THE SABBATH FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER?

(**Note:** Wouldn’t it be convenient if there were a verse in the book of Acts that said, “Thou shalt observe the first day of the week as a New Testament Christian”? We could close the case and move on to other matters. Without such a command, however, we are left to search for how this happened that the first day of the week is observed as a Sabbath, rather than the seventh.)

**A. Some things are very clear.**

### 1. The New Testament church and New Testament believers are not Israel.

### 2. When Christ brought redemption, there can be no doubt a new age began. The age of the law and the prophets ended. Jesus came and fulfilled all the demands of the law.

### 3. The ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper replaced all the ceremonial law of the Jews.

### 4. It should be no surprise to us that since the early believers of the New Testament church were Jewish, they continued, it appears, to show reverence to the seventh day Sabbath. The change to the first day of the week seems to have taken place rather subtly, with no clear command from our Lord or from the apostles.

## B. Some New Testament Scripture shows the emphasis moving to the first day of the week.

### 1. Many give great credence to the observance of the first day of the week, simply by reason of the fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day. This is certainly significant, but still, there is no clear command.

### 2. Acts 15:20&29 The Jewish believers decided what Jewish demands should be placed on Gentile believers, and the observance of the seventh day was not one of those demands.

### 3. Acts 20:7 This verse makes it clear that the disciples were accustomed to assembling on the first day of the week for breaking of bread and the preaching of the Word.

### 4. I Corinthians 16:1-2 It appears the saints both assembled and laid their offerings before the Lord on the first day of the week. Obviously, what sense would it make to assemble on the seventh day, then come back to pay tithes and offerings on the first day?

### 5. Revelation 1:10 John was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” It was interpreted by the last first-century and early second-century believers that that Lord’s Day was the day when the churches assembled to celebrate redemption and the resurrection; the first day of the week!

### 6. Galatians 4:9-11 Paul rebuked their devotion to Old Testament observances to which they remained devoted.

## C. Post-apostolic believers continued on with the observance of the first day of the week (the Lord’s day) as the Sabbath day.

### 1. William Barclay shows great historical evidence that the churches assembled on the first day.

### 2. A book written in the turn of the first century to the second, called The Didache*,*or “The Teaching of the Apostles,” instructs, “On the Lord’s day come together, break bread, . . .”

### 3. Justin Martyr, AD 170: “On the day called the day of the Sun, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together to one place.”

### 4. The famous Tertullian, at about 200 AD, said the heathen believe Christians worship the sun because they worship on Sundays.

5. There are many quotes from early church history about the continuation of the practice of observance of the first day of the week.

**D. G. Campbell Morgan: “Until Christ came, man worked toward his Sabbath. Since Christ, he works from his Sabbath.”**

# III. HOW SHOULD THE BELIEVER OBSERVE THE SABBATH?

## A. Obviously, we cease from normal activities of life.

### 1. Let’s follow the example of Scripture.

### 2. They assembled to pray, to consider the Word, and to fellowship.

## B. Hebrews 10:23-25 This exhortation sums up why we should turn aside to assemble.