

Should Christians Keep the Sabbath Day?

Introduction

The Sabbath commandment is the fourth of the Ten Commandments, commanding rest on the seventh day. Many ask whether Christians today—under the New Covenant—are still required to keep the Sabbath on Saturday. Let us explore what Scripture teaches about the Sabbath, the law, and the rest found in Christ.

1. The Sabbath Is Part of the Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:8–11 (LSB): 'Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your God; in it you shall not do any work...' This commandment is rooted in the creation account and was reaffirmed to Israel at Sinai.

2. The Sabbath Was a Sign for Israel

Exodus 31:16–17 (LSB): 'So the sons of Israel shall keep the sabbath... It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever...' The Sabbath was a covenant sign, unique to Israel, and not imposed on Gentile nations.

3. Jesus Honored the Sabbath—but Also Redefined It

Mark 2:27–28 (LSB): 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.' Jesus observed the Sabbath but also corrected misuses of it, showing that He is Lord of the Sabbath.

4. The Apostles Never Commanded Sabbath-Keeping for Christians

Acts 15 shows the apostles decided not to impose the Mosaic Law on Gentile believers. Romans 14:5–6 (LSB) and Colossians 2:16–17 (LSB) teach that Sabbath observance is now a matter of conscience, not obligation.

5. The Sabbath Points to a Greater Rest in Christ

Hebrews 4:9–10 (LSB): 'So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God... For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works...' The true Sabbath rest is found in Christ. We rest from striving and walk by faith in His completed work.

6. Early Christians Worshiped on the First Day (Sunday)

Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 show believers gathered on the first day of the week. This day became known as 'the Lord's Day' (Revelation 1:10), not to replace the Sabbath but to celebrate Christ's resurrection.

Conclusion

The Sabbath command was fulfilled in Christ and is no longer binding as a day of rest. Christians are called to live in continual rest and holiness in Him. Observing a day of rest is not wrong—but it is not a requirement under the New Covenant.

To God Be the Glory

Matthew 11:28 (LSB): 'Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.'

Reference Scriptures

Exodus 20:8–11 (LSB): Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male slave or your female slave or your cattle or your sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Exodus 31:16–17 (LSB): So the sons of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever, for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed.

Mark 2:27–28 (LSB): And Jesus was saying to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.'

Romans 14:5–6 (LSB): One person judges one day above another, another judges every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards the day, regards it for the Lord, and he who eats, eats for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who does not eat, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

Colossians 2:16–17 (LSB): Therefore no one is to judge you in food and drink, or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Hebrews 4:9–10 (LSB): So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Acts 20:7 (LSB): And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began speaking to them...

1 Corinthians 16:2 (LSB): On the first day of every week each one of you is to set something aside, saving whatever he has prospered...

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

Matthew 11:28 (LSB): Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.