

## Some observations on why Christians emphasise Sunday as their weekly Lord's day, but do not observe the Jewish Sabbath.

1. The Christian has no equivalent to the **Jewish Sabbath**. The **Jews** still have their weekly "Sabbath", which is Saturday. The Christian's relationship with God is through a New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15.) in which holy-days, feasts, priests, repeated sacrifices, etc. have no place. "Therefore" Paul says, "do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17.) *Any significance there is in Sunday for the Christian is not to be thought of as the Christian's equivalent or replacement of the Jewish Sabbath!*
2. In the Old Testament - Genesis 1:31 - 2:3. - We read God rested on the seventh day - Saturday - from His work of CREATION. In the New Testament the day God rested from His greatest work, the work of SALVATION was SUNDAY, and He confirmed that what He saw, after His work was finished, was "very good" by raising Jesus from the dead! (Acts 2:32-36.) Since that Sunday Jesus has entered His rest - His "glory" (see Luke 24:26.) - having completed the work of Salvation. See Hebrews 4:8-11. This "rest" that began on Easter Sunday marked **Sunday** as a very significant day in the Christian's calendar.
3. "Jesus was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." (Romans 4:25.) His "work" for our salvation continued from His crucifixion on Wednesday and on through the next three days and three nights in the tomb until the close of Saturday. (NB. I know of no scriptural or historical reason that would confirm the "traditional" Friday crucifixion! John did NOT say Jesus' crucifixion took place on the day before the regular weekly [Saturday,] Sabbath John records it was the day before the "**special** [Passover] Sabbath" [John 19:31.] NB. I am informed that astronomy confirms the full moon [Passover Sabbath] was on Thursday on 30AD and again on 33AD.) When His "work" was completed He rose again on the **Sunday, after 3 day and 3 nights in the earth** (Matt 12:40.), and the celebration of our Salvation began. See Matthew 28:8-10.
4. As the "Old" era came to an end "the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split." (Matthew 27:51.) The "Saturday" of that weekend was a bleak one indeed - Jesus remained dead in the tomb! Then there came the dawn of a new era on the Easter **Sunday** morning with the glorious resurrection of the Messiah! It is no wonder the Lord's Day of victory and triumph over sin's curse and the grave became a very significant day in the Christian's calendar from that moment on.
5. The risen Lord was first worshipped on a Sunday! Matthew 28:9
6. The resurrection day - (Sunday) - marks for the Christian the critical focal point of our faith. "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that He raised Christ from the dead. ... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:14f.) The resurrection is an essential and climactic belief of the Gospel message. See Acts 5:30-31. & Philippians 2:8-9. Easter **Sunday** is a glorious day to remember for the Christian!
7. The resurrected Jesus added to the significance of Sunday for the Apostles when He came to them and "He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:22.) Seven weeks later, again on a Sunday, Jesus sent down His Holy Spirit upon His Church - the whole company of believers. (Acts 2:1.) **Sunday** is a notable day for Christians - the day God came to His Church in a new and "better" way, for our good. (see John 16:7-15.)
8. Notice how all Persons of the Trinity focus the Christian on events that took place on **Sundays** in the Christian calendar. "**God** has raised this **Jesus** to life [on Sunday], and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised **Holy Spirit** and has poured out [on Sunday] what you now see and hear." (Acts 2:32-33.)
9. **Sunday** is highlighted as a particular day for believers to meet in order to worship and remember their Lord, and to contribute to His work. (see Acts 20:7. & 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:1-2.)
10. Under the "New Covenant" the Christian acknowledges that Jewish customs and religious regulations have no part in the "truth of the Gospel" of Christ. (see Galatians 2:11-21.) Jesus made it very clear that we were not to try to combine the message of His Gospel with the religious beliefs and practices that God had given to the Jews. In Luke 5:36-38 Jesus told this parable: "No-one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. And no-one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins."  
Beware of those who insist on combining Jesus' Gospel with legalistic observance of Jewish rules and regulations! Paul warns against such people in Galatians 4:17. "Those people are zealous to win you over, but

for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them"! You see, "If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing"! (Galatians 2:21.) When the rich young ruler asked Jesus, "What must **I do** to inherit eternal life?" he went away sad because he was not willing to give up on his course of *self-righteousness* and *self-attainment* - a course that Jesus said is "impossible with men" (see Luke 18:18-27. Romans 3:20.)

11. In Creation God's established a universal principle - that of **six days work followed by a day of rest**. "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done." (Genesis 2:1-2.) He later wrote this into the Jewish law and specified very strict limitations on their activities for their Saturday, with severe judgment for failing to observe them to the letter! Exodus 20:8-11. 34:2-3 ! Christians are not under the Jewish law, with its condemnation; but they do recognise the principle that God established in Creation. Christians should *want* to apply the God given universal principle, along with all the other commandments relating to our love for God and for our "neighbour". God writes His laws on the "hearts" of His children (see Hebrews 10:16-18.) and Christians show their love for God when they willingly trust and obey Him - (see John 14:15. & 1 John 5:3.) - *not out of fear of judgment nor in a bid to earn God's favour*. The Christian *has* God's favour though faith in Jesus Christ alone! (Titus 3:4-7.) As Sunday is such a notable day in the Christian calendar it is the day that is most often used by the Christian as a day of rest and a day to avail of the opportunity to unite with other believers to worship God and be instructed in His Word. *This is **not** a legalistic observing of a "holy-day" under threat of wrath and judgment!* Rather it is a loving and trusting response to our great God and Saviour. Some Christians may not be able to set Sundays apart as their day of rest, eg. Doctors, etc. but they, before God, may wish to set another day apart for rest and worship of God. The "day" itself has no binding obligation. There are some Christians who would want to make Sunday a Christian "Sabbath" that **all** are duty bound to observe! Paul's response to them is this: "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God - or rather are known by God - how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you." (Galatians 4:8-11.)

For the Christian *Jesus is Lord*; not the "Sabbath", or those who want to enslave them to legalistic observance of "holy-days"! Some even tried to enslave Jesus to their rules for Sabbath keeping! "Jesus said to them, 'My Father is *always* at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working.' For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill Him; not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.' (John 5:17-18.) On another occasion Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27-28.)

Paul recognised that the faith of some is weaker than others so some may still consider "one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. ....he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. (Romans 14:5-7.) So, if a fellow-believer is convinced that he or she should consider Saturday or Sunday as special unto the Lord, Paul says, "Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Romans 14:4.) If you are truly trusting in Jesus as your Lord and Saviour let EVERYTHING you do be done as unto the Lord, and let us be tolerant of those whose faith may be weaker.

- I offer these observations as some reasons why the Christian's emphasis is on Sunday as their weekly Lord's Day, and why they do not observe the Jewish Sabbath. There are some who, although they have exercised faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, are now in danger of becoming enslaved again to legalistic rules that are seen in some way to contribute to Salvation and acceptance with God. Such confusion will lead to bondage and fear and their loss of peace with God. Make sure your faith is in the unmerited grace of God through Jesus Christ alone for your Salvation, and let nothing move you from that Rock! (Acts 4:10-12. Ephesians 2:8-10.)



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