

Thought Questions About the Sabbath

Study 7

1. But isn't the Sabbath for the Jews only? (Mark 2:27)

No. Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man." Mark 2:27. It is not for the Jews only, but for mankind--all men and women everywhere. The Jewish nation did not even exist until 2,500 years after the Sabbath was made.

2. Isn't Acts 20:7-12 proof that the disciples kept Sunday as a holy day? (Acts 20:7)

According to the Bible, each day begins at sundown and ends at the next sundown (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Leviticus 23:32) and the dark part of the day comes first. So Sabbath begins Friday night at sundown and ends Saturday night at sundown. This meeting of Acts 20 was held on the dark part of Sunday, or on what we now call Saturday night. *The New English Bible** begins Acts 20:7 like this: "On the Saturday night in our assembly ..." It was a Saturday-night meeting, and it lasted until midnight. Paul was on a farewell tour and knew he would not see these people again before his death (verse 25). No wonder he preached so long! (No regular weekly service would have lasted all night.) Paul was "ready to depart on the morrow." The "breaking of bread" has no "holy day" significance whatever, because they broke bread daily (Acts 2:46). There is not the slightest indication in this Scripture passage that the first day is holy, nor that these early Christians considered it so. Nor is there the remotest evidence that the Sabbath had been changed. Incidentally, this meeting is probably mentioned in the Scripture only because of the miracle of raising Eutychus back to life after he fell to his death from a third-floor window. In Ezekiel 46:1, God refers to Sunday as one of the six "working days." *(C) *The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970. Used by permission.*

3. Doesn't 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 speak of Sunday school offerings? (1 Corinthians 16:2)

No, there is no reference here to a public meeting. The money was to be laid aside privately at home. A famine was raging in Judea (Romans 15:26; Acts 11:26-30), and Paul was writing to ask the churches in Asia Minor to assist their famine-stricken brethren. These Christians all kept Sabbath holy, so Paul suggested that on Sunday morning (which was the time they paid bills and settled accounts), after the Sabbath was over, they put aside something for their needy brethren so it would be on hand when he came. It was to be done privately or, as *La Santa Biblia* (a Spanish translation) says, "at home." Notice also that there is no reference here to Sunday as a holy day. In fact, the Bible nowhere commands or even suggests Sunday keeping.

4. But hasn't time been lost and the days of the week changed since the time of Christ? (Luke 4:16)

No! Reliable encyclopedias and reference books make it clear that our seventh day is the same one that Jesus kept holy. It is a simple matter of research.

5. But isn't John 20:19 the record of the disciples instituting Sunday keeping in honor of the resurrection? (John 20:19)

On the contrary, the disciples at this time did not believe that the resurrection had taken place (Mark 16:14). They had met there "for fear of the Jews" and had the doors bolted. When Jesus appeared in their midst, He rebuked them "because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." There is no implication that they counted Sunday as a holy day. Only eight texts in the New Testament mention the first day of the week; none of them imply that it is holy.

6. Doesn't Colossians 2:14-17 do away with the seventh-day Sabbath? (Colossians 2:14)

Not at all. It refers only to the sabbaths which were "a shadow of things to come" and not to the seventh-day Sabbath. There were seven yearly holy days, or holidays, in ancient Israel, which were also called sabbaths. These were in addition to, or "beside the sabbaths of the Lord" (Leviticus 23:38), or seventh-day Sabbath. These all foreshadowed, or pointed to, the cross and ended at the cross. God's seventh-day Sabbath was made before sin entered, and therefore could foreshadow nothing about deliverance from sin. That's why Colossians chapter 2 differentiates and specifically mentions the sabbaths that were "a shadow." These seven yearly sabbaths which were abolished are listed in Leviticus chapter 23.

7. According to Romans 14:5, the day we keep is a matter of personal opinion, isn't it? (Romans 14:5)

Notice that the whole chapter is on judging one another (Verses 4, 10, 13). The issue here is not over the seventh-day Sabbath, which was a part of the great moral law, but over the yearly feast days of the ceremonial law. Jewish Christians were judging Gentile Christians for not observing them. Paul is simply saying, "Don't judge each other. That ceremonial law is no longer binding."