

WHAT ABOUT THE SABBATH?

Joe Slater

God Himself rested on the seventh day. The fourth commandment mandated that Israel observe the seventh day of each week as a holy day. Jesus kept the Sabbath. Why, then, do we not keep the seventh day as a Sabbath in the Christian age? Due to the frequency with which this question arises, the difficulty many experience in understanding it, and the huge volume of false teaching published about it, we will use this article and a follow-up next week to deal with the Sabbath issue.

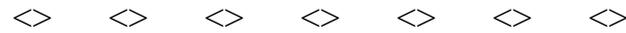
Sabbath means “rest” or “cessation.” God “rested” or ceased creating on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3). Note that God did not call the seventh day the Sabbath Day at that time, nor did He tell Adam and Eve to observe the seventh day of each week as a holy day. Seventh Day Adventists and several others claim that God gave the Sabbath command at creation, and therefore everyone in every age is obligated to keep the Sabbath. Their claim lacks support from the Genesis record, besides which it conflicts with Nehemiah 9:13, 14 (see the next paragraph).

There is no record of any human being observing the Sabbath Day until Exodus 16:23-31, about six weeks after the Hebrew slaves left Egypt. Regular keeping of the seventh day as a day of rest became part of God’s law for Israel in Exodus 20:4-6, as God delivered the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. This agrees with Nehemiah 9:13, 14, which says that the Sabbath was “made known” at Mt. Sinai. If God had given the Sabbath command at the creation, then Nehemiah would be wrong in saying it was “made known” at Sinai.

God intended for the Sabbath to be a reminder to Israel of her deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). The Sabbath was also a sign of God’s

covenant with Israel (Exodus 31:12-17). If the Sabbath had been given to all people at creation, then it could not have been a sign between God and Israel, nor would it remind Israel of anything. Therefore, we know that the Sabbath command applied only to Israel. God’s words through Ezekiel agree with this: “I also gave them (i.e. Israel) My Sabbaths to be a sign between them and Me” (20:10-12).

As God delivered Israel from literal, physical slavery, Jesus the Christ delivers us from slavery to sin (John 8:31-36; Romans 6:17, 18). We remember what Jesus did for us, not by keeping the Sabbath, but by observing the Lord’s Supper on the first day of each week (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7).



How To Think About Family

My father took my friend and me to a basketball game. As he paid for the tickets, I said, “Thank you, Dad.” He kindly replied, “You’re welcome. Just do the same for your son one day.”

I’ve never forgotten how generous and gracious my father is. My mother, who often nursed my severe childhood headaches and heartaches, has never failed to warm my heart with love and care.

A family goes through bumps in the road - together. But the things that abide are the affection, care, and concern we tender to one another. Those things (not just bloodlines) make a real family.

--Jared Jackson (Jackson, TN) via Fortify Your Faith

Greet One Another

“I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name” (3 John 14 NAS).

At least seven times in the New Testament inspired writers told Christians to “*greet one another with a holy kiss*” (Rom. 16:16, 20). The manner of expressing a greeting differs from culture to culture. Paul is not promoting a new practice, but regulating an old custom. The fact that he said, “holy kiss” certainly underscores the need “to guard against all improper familiarity and scandal” (Barnes). Peter describes this as “*a kiss of love*” (1 Pet. 5:14). Judas's kiss of betrayal is one of the outstanding examples of an “unholy kiss.”

In our culture, kissing the cheek may be acceptable for very close friends, but is not acceptable with strangers or acquaintances. Instead, a hand shake is acceptable.

While the manner of greeting deserves careful consideration, let's focus upon the importance of the greeting itself. Why do you suppose there was such an emphasis upon greeting one another? Do you think perhaps there is a source of joy and strength from reuniting with Christian brothers and sisters? One cannot read the sixteenth chapter of Romans and fail to notice that Paul, at least twenty times, encourages Christians to greet each other! I think we all should do the same!

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)