

# THE SABBATH

## When was the Sabbath changed to the Lord's Day?

The Sabbath was never changed to the Lord's Day. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, or our Saturday. The Lord's Day is the first day of the week, or our Sunday.

## What is a Christian's relation to the Sabbath?

Although God Himself rested from the work of creation on the Sabbath day (Gen. 2:2,3), He did not command anyone else to do so until He gave the manna to the Nation of Israel (Exodus 16:26). Later He included the keeping of the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8,10).

The Sabbath was a day of responsibility. The Jews were forbidden to do servile work. Those who broke the Sabbath, even by gathering sticks for fire wood, were put to death (Numbers 15:32-36).

Nowhere in the New Testament are Christians ever commanded to keep the Sabbath.

## What is a Christian's relation to the Lord's Day?

In this age of grace, believers set aside the Lord's Day in a special way for worship and service because:

- a. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead on that day, a proof that the work of redemption was completed (John 20:1).
- b. The early disciples met on that day to break bread, showing forth the Lord's death (Acts 20:7).
- c. It is the day appointed by God in which Christians should hold a collection and lay by in store as the Lord has prospered them (1 Cor. 16:1, 2).
- d. It is the day on which the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2:1; compare Lev. 23:15, 16).

To the believer, the Lord's Day is not a day of duty, which he keeps under threat of punishment by death. Rather it is a day of privilege, when he should seek to praise and serve the Lord in a special way, since he is released from his daily occupation.

“The true character of the Lord's day is illustrated in our Lord's use of it. He comforted weeping Mary; walked seven miles with two perplexed disciples, giving a Bible reading by the way; sent messages to other disciples; had a private interview with backslidden Peter, and imparted the Holy Spirit to the men in the upper chamber.” - *C. I. Scofield*

## Did a pope make the change?

No pope changed the Sabbath to Sunday. The Sabbath is still the seventh day, and the first day of the week is the Lord's day.

“Under the law, after a week of work, rest was needed. But when all the work has been done, it is a different matter. We can begin the week with rest, for our Lord Jesus has done all the work necessary for our salvation.”  
*F. W. Dixon*

## ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE SABBATH

1. Sabbath-keeping is one of the Ten Commandments, and these are definitely said to be “done away” for the believer in Christ (2 Cor. 3:7-11). It is futile to argue, as some do, that this passage refers to the ceremonial law and not to the moral law. In verse 7 the law is described as “the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones.” This could only refer to the moral law, that is, the Ten Commandments. Then in verse 11 we read that the ministration of death, though glorious, is “done away”. Nothing could be clearer than this. The Christian is not obligated to keep the Sabbath.

2. No Gentile was ever commanded to keep the Sabbath. The law was given to the Jewish people (Ex. 31:13). Although God Himself rested on the seventh day, He didn't command anyone else to do it at that time. Sabbath-keeping was first commanded at Mt. Sinai, and then only to the children of Israel.

3. It is not true, as some allege, that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday by the decree of some Pope. Christians set aside the Lord's Day in a special way for worshiping and serving the Lord because:

- a. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead on that day, a proof that the work of redemption was completed (John 20:1). Also He met with His disciples that same evening and on the following Sunday (John 20:19,26).
- b. The Holy Spirit was given on the first day of the week (Pentecost was the seventh Sunday after the resurrection).
- c. The early disciples met on that day to break bread, showing forth the Lord's death (Acts 20:7).
- d. Paul instructed the Christians to take up a collection on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1,2).

4. Jews under law have their day of rest at the end of a week of toil. Christians under grace begin their week with a day of rest, because Christ has finished the work.

5. The Sabbath was a day of obligation. The Lord's Day is a day of privilege. Released from secular occupations, we are enabled to devote it to Him in a special way.

6. The Sabbath commemorated the first creation. The Lord's Day is linked with the new creation.

7. The Sabbath was a shadow of what was to come, but the substance belongs to Christ (Col. 2:16, 17).

8. Christians cannot be condemned for failing to keep the Sabbath (Col. 2:16).

Sabbath-keepers answer this by claiming that “sabbath-days” in Col. 2:16 (KJV) refer to all sabbaths except the weekly sabbath. But the critical versions have the singular “sabbath” in this verse.

9. The law is fulfilled in loving one's neighbor (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14), not in the rigid observance of a day.

10. Sabbath-keepers argue that the Ten Commandments enshrine moral principles that are for every age. They do not see that the commandment concerning the Sabbath is more ceremonial than moral. The keeping of a day is not inherently right or wrong in itself. The only reason that it was wrong to work on the seventh day was because God said so.