

Why Do We Meet on Saturday?

It is not often that you find a Christian church that regularly meets on Saturday, but there is a very good, Biblical reason why we do at Rock Valley Christian Church. While Christians can and should worship God every day of the week, there is one day that God set apart and made holy. Before there were Christians, Jews or any other kind of religion on earth, God made the heavens and earth and then He rested on the seventh day and made it holy (Genesis 1:1-2:3).

We live in a day and age where God's Word is not highly regarded and where the commandments of God are often exchanged for the commandments and traditions of men. However, we believe that God's Word is the source for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness that we may each be complete, ready for every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). The key question to be answered in this Bible Study is: **Should Christians keep the Sabbath?**

As you go through the Bible Study below, we encourage you to read each of the verses from your own Bible and even write them down, if you like. It is so important to know what the Word of God says and we encourage you to believe what you read from the Bible as opposed to what tradition tells us.

1. What is the history of the seventh-day Sabbath? Where did it originate and who created it?

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Note: Colossians 1:16 tells us that all things seen and unseen were made by Him [the Word who became Jesus Christ (John 1:1-14)]. The knowledge of the seven day week, which mankind still uses today, and the knowledge of the seventh-day Sabbath are only revealed by the Word of God. There is no physical, identifying sign that separates the seventh-day, it is something only revealed to man by revelation from God.

Points to Ponder: Who does the Bible say made the seventh day holy? Was this a day made by the Jews or by God? Do you believe the God sanctified the seventh day just as much as you believe He made the heavens and earth and all that is in them?

2. Who did Jesus say the Sabbath was made for?

Mark 2:27-28

Points to Ponder: How do you acknowledge and enjoy what God made for you? Who is Lord or Master of the Sabbath?

3. How did God reveal that there was a seventh-day Sabbath to mankind?

Exodus 16:1-36

Points to Ponder: Whose law was God revealing, man's or his own? What did God want the people to do on the Sabbath day? For how many years did God "prove" there was a seventh-day Sabbath to the Israelites by raining bread for six days with none on the seventh?

4. What is God's command regarding keeping the Sabbath day?

Exodus 20:8-11

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Points to Ponder: Why do you think God said, "Remember" the Sabbath Day? Was the Sabbath a new creation with the giving of the law or did God confirm it originated at creation, before there was Jew and Gentile? Why do you think God wanted them to remember that He made the heavens and the earth, as well as the Sabbath? Why do you think God wanted them to remember the freedom from slavery He gave to them? In what ways have you been freed by God?

5. Why did God command the Israelites to keep the Sabbath?

Exodus 31:12-18

Points to Ponder: In what way was the Sabbath a sign between God and His people? What did God want this sign of the Sabbath to show to others? How does keeping the Sabbath show that you believe the Lord God is the creator of the heavens and the earth?

6. What makes a person an Israelite or Jew in God's eyes?

Romans 2:25-29

Points to Ponder: What kind of circumcision is God interested in? How are you spiritually circumcised and thus, a child of God?

7. What are the righteous requirements of the law that the Apostle Paul refers to in Romans 2:26 making the physically uncircumcised as if they were circumcised before God?

Isaiah 56:1-7

Points to Ponder: What does God say are the righteous requirements of the law? How does God say He will reward those, even physically uncircumcised, who keep from defiling the Sabbath and doing any evil thing?

8. What did God command to be done on the Sabbath?

Leviticus 23:3

Notes: A holy convocation is a meeting or gathering of people, generally to worship God or hear His Word taught.

Points to Ponder: How have you made the Sabbath a day of rest? How have you had holy convocations on the Sabbath?

9. Did Jesus keep the Sabbath Day by having holy convocations?

Mark 1:21
Luke 4:16
Luke 4:31
Luke 6:6
Luke 13:10

Points to Ponder: In regard to whether or not we should keep the Sabbath, what would Jesus do? What did he do? What was one activity that took place when He gathered with others on the Sabbath?

Note: Some suggest that Jesus came to do away with His commandments, of which the Sabbath is one. However, note that there are many places in the New Testament where Christians are told to keep the commandments. Confirm this for yourself in the Bible by reading Matthew 19:16-17, John 14:15-21, John 15:10, I Corinthians 7:19, I John 2:3-6, I John 3:22-24, I John 5:2-3, Revelation 12:17, Revelation 14:12, Revelation 22:14.

10. Who did Jesus say the owner and ruler of the Sabbath day?

Mark 2:27-28
Luke 6:5

Points to Ponder: Is Jesus Lord of things that do not exist? Would Jesus say He was Lord of something that He did not intend His disciples to recognize?

11. Did Jesus disciples keep the Sabbath after His death?

Luke 23:56

Points to Ponder: Did Jesus train His disciples to stop keeping the Sabbath or to keep it according to the commandment?

12. Did Jesus' disciples, even the Apostle Paul, keep the Sabbath after His resurrection?

Acts 13:14
Acts 16:13
Acts 17:2
Acts 18:4

Points to Ponder: Was the Sabbath day still a day being recognized by the disciples and recorded as the Sabbath after the resurrection of Jesus? Did Paul keep the same custom as Jesus did regarding the Sabbath (see Luke 4:16, 31)?

13. Did Gentiles keep the Sabbath as well as Jews?

Acts 13:42-44

Acts 18:4

Notes: Antioch was a city in Asia Minor and Corinth was a city in Greece. Notice that on the Sabbath day in Corinth, Paul was in the synagogue persuading both Jews and Greeks. The modern day notion that only Jews, and not Gentiles were keeping the Sabbath does not match the Scripture.

Points to Ponder: According to the Bible, were Gentiles meeting on the Sabbath day as well as Jews? Was it the Jews or the Gentiles in Antioch (Acts 13:42) that asked Paul to preach to them again next Sabbath?

14. Will Jesus' disciples be keeping the Sabbath in the future, before the Great Tribulation occurs?

Matthew 24:20-21

Points to Ponder: Will Jesus' disciples be keeping the Sabbath near the end of the age, before the Great Tribulation?

15. Will the Sabbath be kept in the time of the New Heavens and New Earth, after Jesus' return?

Isaiah 66:22-23

Points to Ponder: Consider what a glorious time it will be when all shall come together to worship God on the Sabbath.

Summary: God reveals that He is the One True Creator of the heavens and the earth. He also revealed that He made the seventh day holy after creating all the things which are seen. While this day cannot be perceived to be different than any other day through the five senses, God has revealed it to us through His Word. Therefore, God made the Sabbath a sign between Him and those who would believe that He is the One True Creator (for if you believe that He made all things seen in heaven and earth, you would also believe that He made the unseen Sabbath).

God revealed the Sabbath to Israel after choosing them to be His own people, giving them His law and showing for 40 years that He would not give them manna on that day. He commanded that we remember the Sabbath, and not forget it, in the Commandments. Jesus showed that He kept the Sabbath Day when He was on the earth and we see by example that His disciples continued to recognize and keep the Sabbath after His death and resurrection.

Jesus declared that He was Lord of the Sabbath and He prophesied that His disciples would be keeping the Sabbath before the Great Tribulation, a still future event. Finally, God speaks of a time of the New Heavens and New Earth when all will come to worship God on the Sabbath.

Nowhere in the Bible is a Christian told to stop keeping the Sabbath or that the Sabbath was done away. In fact, you have to look at post-Biblical sources to discover how the Sabbath was disregarded and changed from Saturday to Sunday over 300 years after Jesus' lived on the earth. You will also discover how current mainstream Christianity ultimately came to disregard any observance of the Sabbath, a concept that is virtually non-existent through the first 1800 years of Christianity.

Following are three references from the Catholic Church regarding the topic of the Sabbath Day:

Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., *The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (1957), p. 50.

"Question: Which is the Sabbath day?

"Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."

Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 4, p. 153.

"Q. What is the Third Commandment

"A. The Third Commandment is: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

"A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"A. The Catholic Church, after changing the day of rest from Saturday, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day, made the third commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept as the Lord's Day."--*Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 4, p. 153.*

Peter R. Kraemer, Catholic Church Extension Society (1975), Chicago, Illinois.

"Regarding the change from the observance of the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday, I wish to draw your attention to the facts:

- "1) That Protestants, who accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and religion, should by all means go back to the observance of the Sabbath. The fact that they do not, but on the contrary observe the Sunday, stultifies them in the eyes of every thinking man.
- "2) We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible we have the living Church, the authority of the Church, as a rule to guide us. We say, this Church, instituted by Christ to teach and guide man through life, has the right to change the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament and hence, we accept her change of the Sabbath to Sunday. We frankly say, yes, the Church made this change, made this law, as she made many other laws, for instance, the Friday abstinence, the unmarried priesthood, the laws concerning mixed marriages, the regulation of Catholic marriages and a thousand other laws.

"It is always somewhat laughable, to see the Protestant churches, in pulpit and legislation, demand the observance of Sunday, of which there is nothing in their Bible."

We hope you appreciated this Biblical study of the Sabbath Day. Ultimately, you either recognize what the Bible says or what the church and church tradition says. Is the Bible the ultimate authority on the Sabbath or did man in the church have the right to change it? That is the question for each in good conscience to answer.