

COMMANDMENT NUMBER FOUR: KEEP THE LORD'S DAY APART

Exodus 20: 8-11 Deuteronomy 5:13-15

Introduction: The first commandment told us to worship God and no other. The second commandment told us to not make images and worship them. The third commandment told us not to take His Holy name lightly. This fourth commandment speaks of a special time God has set aside for us to rest from our activities and focus on time with Him. God set aside one day out of seven for us to do just that. Years ago in this country of America Sundays were indeed special. There were long worship services then family dinners with afternoons spent in doing family things. There were "blue laws" which forbade most stores from being open and from only emergency things being sold. Nobody "ate out" on Sundays then and everybody had their "Sunday-go-to-meeting" clothes they wore only on Sundays, weddings or funerals. Originally the day people set aside was the one we call Saturday. How did this get started and how did it change?

I. GOD SET ASIDE THE SPECIAL DAY

1. Reading the account of the creation shows that God did certain things on certain "days" and ended His creativeness on the "sixth" day and on the "seventh" day He rested from all that He had been doing. That day was called the "sabbath."
2. Remember when Israel was in the wilderness on their way to the promised land and God was providing every need they had. On the day before the sabbath everyone was told to gather twice as much food as they usually did for God did not provide food for them on the sabbath. God was showing them that the seventh day was special even before He gave them the ten commandments.
3. God knew that people needed a rest from six days of working and that their animals needed rest as well. Also during those six days the minds of the people were on their work and their thoughts about God were not that many, so on the seventh day, the sabbath, God wanted the people to rest and to turn their thoughts to Him.
4. Through the centuries the religious leaders of God's people changed and added to God's basic requirements of keeping the sabbath apart, holy. They added laws that forced the people to do and not do things that were ridiculous and very hard to keep. Jesus stayed in trouble with the religious leaders because He was always breaking their precious sabbath laws. They had forgotten that the Sabbath was made for man, animals and the land.

II. WHY SUNDAY TODAY AND NOT THE SABBATH?

1. There is no scripture telling us to change from Saturday to Sunday. Are we wrong, are we breaking this commandment?
2. It was on the first day of the week (Sunday) that:
 - Jesus was resurrected from the grave.
 - Jesus had fellowship with His disciples, eating with them.
 - Jesus commissioned His disciples, breathed upon them and gave them instructions.
 - Jesus ascended.
 - The Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples in the upper room.
 - The followers of Jesus began to meet and break bread in worship.
 - Jesus visited the aging John exiled on the Isle of Patmos.
 - Many more wonderful events.
3. There is no reminder left by Jesus nor His disciples or any writer of the New Testament to keep the Sabbath.
- *Romans 14:5-6 Galatians 3:24; 4:10 Colossians 2:6-17*
4. The Church, Christianity was born on the first day of the week, Sunday.

III. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?

1. The Old Testament people worked for their blessings/forgiveness for six days then they rested and worshipped on the seventh day or the Sabbath.
 - The New Testament people worship first then work the remaining six days of the week in grace.
2. The Old Testament people were commanded to obey the laws of the Sabbath with penalties for not doing so.
 - The New Testament people willingly recognize and honor Sunday as the Lord's Day and there are no penalties.
3. God has in a way put a "hold" on the Old Testament manner of life and worship until after the Church Age is over.
4. Sunday, the first day of the week, is the day Christians come together and worship God and His Son, Jesus.

IV. WHAT ARE WE CHRISTIANS SUPPOSED TO DO ON SUNDAY?

1. The day is to be devoted to the Lord Jesus.
 - Worship, fellowship, service, prayer
 - Study of God's Word and to rest.
2. No Christian is Commanded to worship on Sunday and there is NO death penalty.
 - Christians are to willingly, faithfully, eagerly, joyfully, whole heartedly and eagerly worship the Lord Jesus.
3. Some Christians have problems worshipping on Sunday, however:
 - Have other plans.
 - Want to sleep in and "rest."
 - Are bored during the services.
 - Pastors fail to preach God's Word.

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus ended His work on a Friday, rested on Saturday in a tomb, and created His Church on Sunday.
2. Sunday is for Christians to withdraw from the world and spend it together with God and His Son, Jesus.
3. Christians should willingly gather on Sunday to worship, pray and give thanks.