

## Q & A

**Question:** I really don't think the Sabbath is that important any more. Why do people try to bring it up again?  
The dictionary says that Sunday is now the Christian Sabbath.

**Answer:** It is true that many dictionaries define Sunday as the “Christian Sabbath” and Saturday as the “Jewish Sabbath.” However, the dictionary is not a theological treatise. It is merely a reflection of prevailing usage. Most of Christianity considers the seventh-day Sabbath a forgotten relic of the past.

Even marriage, with its historical record of thousands of years since Creation, is now in a process of redefinition across the planet. Will secular dictionaries of the future also reflect a new prevailing usage?

What is the determining factor that decides whether marriage or the seventh-day Sabbath is still important?

Fortunately, it is still widely accepted that the Bible is the determining factor of what is absolute truth in the Christian experience. In fact, Jesus, who said “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17), also said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Jesus expanded on this even more in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19—31 ). In the parable the rich man appeals to Abraham to warn his five unrepentant brothers of what the future holds for them. Abraham answers: “If they hear not Moses and the prophets [the Old Testament] neither will they be

persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Jesus has illustrated that what He declared in the Old Testament is as important as what He declares as the risen Christ. This is why it can be said that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). We can count on what God says to be true, whether it is 2500 B. C. or 2015 A.D.

So, where in the Bible do the overwhelming majority of Christians discover the declaration of the “mouth of God” concerning Sunday observance? Where in Scripture has God announced Sunday as the “Lord's Day”? And where can one find the pattern of first day assembly among Christ's disciples and believers in the New Testament? Where in Scripture is the seventh-day Sabbath labeled the “Jewish Sabbath”? Where does God speak to the Jews, calling the Sabbath “your holy day”? Certainly, the person who trusts the Bible would choose to believe Scripture rather than the dictionary.

## **Unforgettable communication**

What would it take for God to so speak that Bible readers would place such importance on the Scriptures that what God said would direct their choices in life? Would it take shaking the ground one is standing on or lighting up the sky with pyrotechnic smoke, fire and lightning, and causing a mountain to rumble and quake? Would He need to audibly speak with brilliant intonations so that people listening would instantly know that He meant what He said?

**Believe it or not,** there was such a time when God

did exactly that. And that was the only time in the recorded history of the world that it has ever happened. Today people still talk about the event and portray it in movies. God spoke audibly from the smoking, flaming, shaking mountain of Sinai to the two million freed Israelites gathered in the plain. As God spoke, they trembled and hugged the earth because the display before them was so dramatic, awesome, powerful, and even frightening. The atmosphere was unmistakably full of the presence of the Almighty (Exodus 20).

So, what did God say on that day that was so vital to the world and that would impact coming generations until the end of Earth time?

He spoke the **Ten Commandments** audibly! What proceeded from the “mouth of God” that day continues to be the guiding source of civility and righteous living for the human race. Are these divine commands not meant to be the point of reference for the conscience of every human being? Are they not a description of the character—the very essence—of the earth's Maker? And, is not Jesus, the perfect righteous One, the living expression of each commandment including the fourth? And was it not predicted that His followers at the end of time would be identified as those who cherish living by the standard of God's commandments (Revelation 12:17)?

To make certain that humans would realize the long-range significance of what he had declared, God did not allow Moses to write the commandments

down. Rather, God chose to write them down Himself with His own finger on tablets of stone, thus signifying their divine, eternal, permanent and universal status.

Does the fourth commandment, placed at the center of the ten, and pointing to an action of God in setting apart the seventh day at Creation—long before the inauguration of the Israelite nation—not also have this perpetual status? You make the call.

**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. Exodus 20:8-11**

To further seal the sacred nature of the Ten Commandments, spoken from His mouth, Jehovah God directed Moses to place the tables of stone within the Ark of the Covenant. Above them was the mercy seat and the Shekinah glory (the visible manifestation of God) with angels on each side. There could not be a more secure and sacred place in the whole world. It was a miniature of God's throne in Heaven.

From the inauguration of the Israelite nation in their liberation from Egypt, God planned that His character

(the Ten Commandments) would be lived out before the nations. Every faithful king, priest and prophet in Israel, for hundreds of years, nurtured the nation with the seventh-day Sabbath of the Creator God. All Israel was on display to the nations of the earth. All people groups were invited by the LORD Himself to join in worshipping the Creator God: “. . . for My house shall be a house of prayer for all people” (Isaiah 56:7).

### **A hopeful proposition**

Eight hundred years later, after a multitude of God's prophets had cried out to the nation to be faithful to the Creator God, only the nation of Judah remained. The invading Babylonian armies had already removed the elite Hebrew youth of Judah, including Daniel the prophet. The kings of Judah were in chronic rebellion against the LORD, and the priests of Solomon's temple were in apostasy.

The seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment had lost its importance to them. But was it still important to God? Through the prophet Ezekiel, the “mouth of God” spoke regarding these wayward religious leaders:

**“Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, . . . and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.”** Ezekiel 22:27

The instrument of destruction, the Babylonian army, was on its way to flatten the palaces and walls of Jerusalem. Even the world-renowned temple of Solomon was in jeopardy. On one condition would Jehovah God miraculously spare the city and its

population. Though scorned and ridiculed, the prophet Jeremiah announced the condition:

**“. . . Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem . . . Take head to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.”** Jeremiah 17:20-22

God's chosen instrument of examination was the fourth commandment, which contained God's seal of sovereignty. As Judah stood poised for destruction, the Sabbath became the supreme test of Judah's loyalty to the God of heaven. Jeremiah announced what would be the result if Judah failed to take God at His word:

**“But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, . . . then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.”**

Jeremiah 17:27

Blinded by years of unfaithfulness, the princes, priests, and people gave this sad, fateful response to their heavenly King:

**“And they said, 'This is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one do the**

**imagination of his evil heart.”**

Jeremiah 18:12

When the people of God seek the delight and blessing of the Sabbath experience, they reveal their reliance and dependence on God's wisdom and protection. Even under threat of destruction, Judah collectively demonstrated an autonomous attitude of indifference and defiance toward their Provider. The divine Sabbath directive served as a barometer of the heart. The actions of the leaders of Judah revealed that they no longer recognized God's dominion over them.

The people of Judah sealed their fate. With the protective hand of God removed, the armies of Babylon would now wreak their cruel havoc unhindered. Ancient Judah had foolishly lost Jerusalem. Their nation was in disarray, and their homes, palaces, temple and city walls would be destroyed.

Does the passing of time over centuries minimize or nullify what God has spoken in His fourth commandment? If the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not important anymore, who will step forward volunteering to remind God that He, Jehovah God, should apologize, forthwith, to the nation of Judah for pronouncing the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath as a condition of their survival?

### **Approaching Jesus on the Saturday Sabbath**

How does the Savior of the world view the Creation Sabbath? He personally said “the Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27). “Man” means

mankind. From Adam to the last person born on Earth, the Sabbath is God's design for every human being. Jesus declared this day to be “honorable” and designated it His “holy day.” Those who observe it honor Him. It is a delight to those who engage Him in this way (Isaiah 58:13, 14). Made by Jesus in the beginning (Genesis 2:1-3), it is destined to be the centerpiece of worship throughout eternity (Isaiah 66:22, 23). As outlined in the fourth commandment, the weekly Sabbath will be the primary time for the redeemed to gather with Jesus throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

***With this Bible information,*** is there a God-fearing, grace-filled person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century who is willing to stand before Jesus, look Him face-to-face and eye-to-eye, and tell Him that His seventh-day, Saturday Sabbath, is not important any more?

Answer prepared by Daniel Knauft, author ***Sacred Time unRemembered—How the Original Sabbath Was Lost and Why It Matters***, published, 2014.  
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