

THE SABBATH OF JESUS

In our last two studies, we found in Scripture that God's ten commandments are eternal, timeless, and changeless, even as God Himself is eternal, timeless, and changeless. They reveal to us God's holy character, with its loveliness, selflessness, majesty, purity, honesty, truthfulness. They show sinners where they are out of harmony with such a God, a condition the Bible calls sin (1 John 3:4). Thus, they help us to see our great need of Christ, who willingly forgives the sins of every repentant person (Matthew 1:21; John 6:37). And Christ, in turn, creates a love within our hearts that enables us to want to keep the ten commandments (John 14:15)."

Referring to the ten commandments, John Wesley once said: "Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstance liable to change, but on the nature of God and nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other."---Sermons, Vol. I, Sermon 25, pages 221,222.

We found this to be biblically true in our last studies. But it also now raises some questions. First, is the fourth commandment, the seventh day Sabbath, as eternal as the rest of the commandments? Is it important which day we keep, just so we keep one? Was there a change made by Christ or the apostles which could help us to correctly answer these questions? Let us see what we can find in the Bible.

1. We already know that about 2,500 years after creation, God gave the ten commandments to Moses at Mt. Sinai. Re-read the Sabbath commandment that He gave at that time in Exodus 20:8-11. If you would look up the word "Sabbath" in a Bible concordance, and read every text in which it occurs from Moses' day to the time of Christ, we would have no question that it was continually observed (and broken) throughout that period of history.
2. Was Sinai really its beginning place? Re-read Exodus 20:11, and then Genesis 2:1-3. Where, when, how did it really begin?

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3. Is the Sabbath ever referred to again before it was given on Mt. Sinai? What do we find in Exodus 16:1-3, 11-26, in connection with the Israelites in the wilderness before Sinai?
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(It is important to note two things in reference to the commandments in this early, pre-Sinai, period of history. First, though there is little mention of "Commandments" or "Sabbath," the records clearly point out the "rights" and "wrongs" as contained in the ten commandments. Second, the commandments and Sabbath existed long before there was a Jew on earth. Thus, it is difficult to say that the Sabbath was given only for the Jews.)

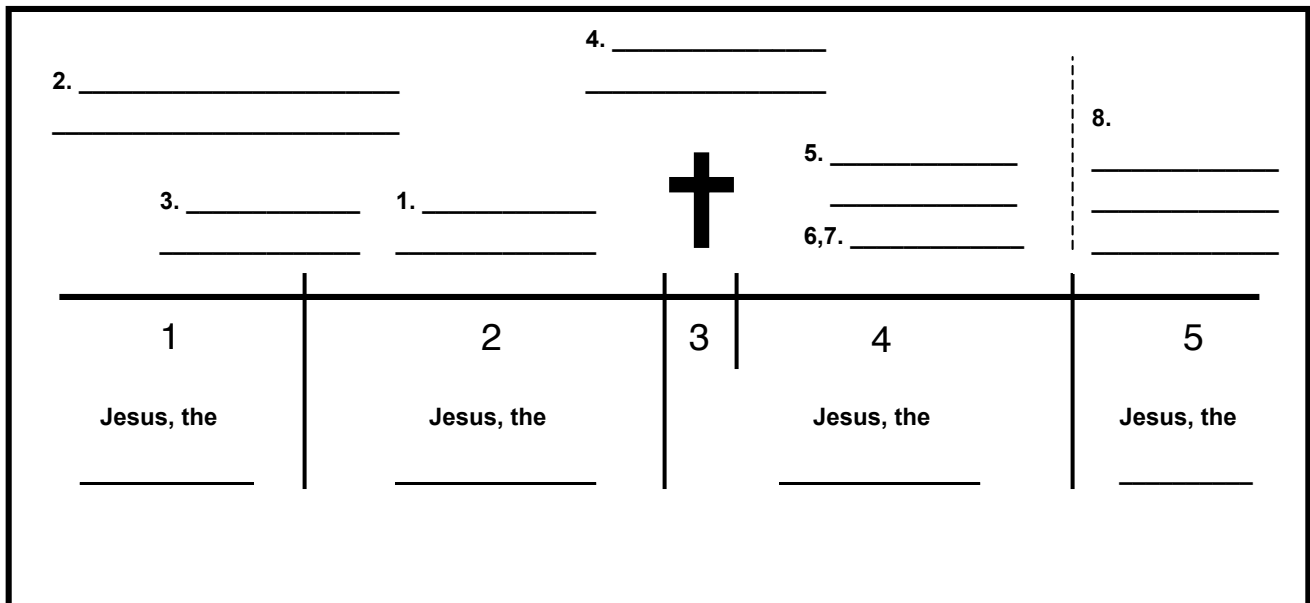
4. What was the attitude and practice of Jesus in relation to the Sabbath in His day? Write down what you find in these texts.
 - (a) Matthew 12:8 _____
 - (b) Mark 6:2; Luke 4:16 _____
 - (c) Luke 6:1-11 _____

(Christ's great objective was to put love back into Sabbath-keeping, something that the Jews of the period between the Old and New Testaments, and in Jesus' day had almost totally removed.)

- (d) Which day of the week was still the Sabbath at the time when Jesus died, according to Luke 23:54-24:1? _____
- 5. As we move beyond Christ's ascension, into the period of the apostles and the early Christian church, what do we find being practiced and taught in relation to the seventh-day Sabbath?
 - (a) Acts 13:14-16, 42-44 (about 15 years later) _____
 - (b) Read also Acts 16:12,13; 17:1,2; 18:1-4,11.
- 6. What had Jesus Himself told the Jews to pray about in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, in Matthew 24:20? _____
- 7. Knowing that the faithful apostle John was a Sabbath-keeper, what would we conclude about his teaching on the Sabbath near the end of the first century, AD, by tying together Revelation 1:10, Mark 2:27,28, and Exodus 20:10? _____
- 8. What did Isaiah teach in Isaiah 66:22,23 as he was shown a time far off in the future? _____

The **CREATOR**, Jesus, gave Adam the Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3).
 The **LAWGIVER**, Jesus, gave Moses the Sabbath (James 4:12).
 The **SAVIOR**, Jesus, kept the Sabbath (Luke 4:16).
 The **KING** of the new earth, Jesus, preserves the Sabbath throughout eternity. (Isaiah 66:22,23).

What will we do today, about the Sabbath of Jesus, which, like a great arch, spans time from eternity to eternity? In our next lesson we will see what the Bible tells us about its purpose, how we can be blessed as we keep Jesus' eternal day.



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Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of lesson 21: This is the first of three lessons on the Sabbath. The purpose of this study is to show the eternalness of the Sabbath through five periods of time beginning with the "common ground" period from Moses to the end of the Old Testament. Second, we will look back to the pre-Sinai period; third, during the four gospels; fourth, the New Testament period of the early church; and fifth, to the time of God's eternal new earth.

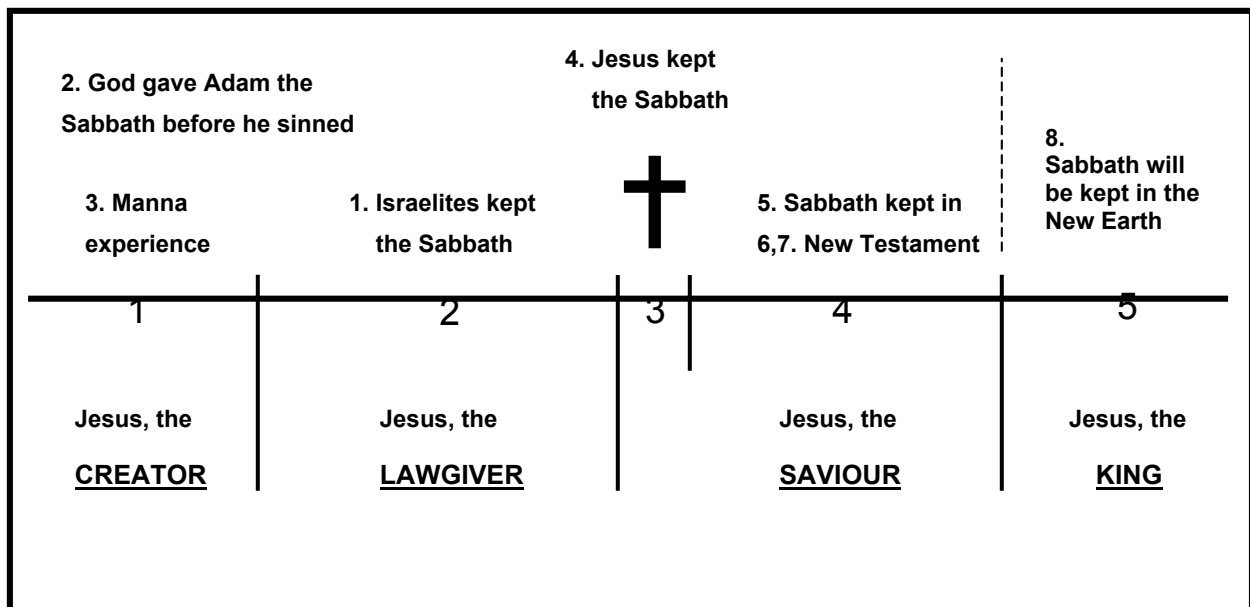
Lesson 22 will concentrate on the spiritual purpose of the Sabbath and how it can mature our relation to Christ, and lesson 23 will cover the change of the Sabbath.

During the lesson itself: Keep the questions and answers in the lesson simple, attempting to clearly show the seventh-day Sabbath throughout all time. In connection with question 2, show that the Sabbath existed before sin. Also show that in connection with question 8, it will continue to exist forever after sin is forever destroyed.

You will find it helpful to discuss the theories of the "Lord's day" in connection with question 7. Establish the Scriptural position first with the texts, then discuss the theories. (See 7 BC 735, 736.)

Appeal: The basis of the appeal is in the closing note. Lessons 21-23 are designed to lead to a clear decision to keep the Sabbath of Jesus.

Illustration: Use it to make the five periods of time clear, and to show that it is truly the "Sabbath of Jesus" all the way through history.



Introduction**1 John 3:4**

⁴Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

Matthew 1:21

²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

John 6:37

³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

1. Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but 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 male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. ¹¹For *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.

2. Exodus 20:11

¹¹For *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.

Genesis 2:1-3

¹Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ²And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

<u>Answer:</u> In Eden at the end of creation week by the command of the Creator, God.

3. Exodus 16:1-3, 11-26

¹And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. ²Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

¹¹And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹²“I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I *am* the Lord your God.’”

¹³So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. ¹⁴And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small

round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵So when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was.

And Moses said to them, "This *is* the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. ¹⁶This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, *according to the* number of persons; let every man take for *those who are* in his tent.'"

¹⁷Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸So when they measured *it* by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. ¹⁹And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning."

²⁰Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. ²¹So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

²²And so it was, on the sixth day, *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. ²³Then he said to them, "This *is what* the Lord has said: 'Tomorrow *is* a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord. Bake what you will bake *today*, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'"²⁴So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. ²⁵Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. ²⁶Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

Answer: The miracle of the manna in the wilderness before Israel reaching Mt. Sinai – extra manna fell on Friday and none on the Sabbath, the seventh day.

4a. Matthew 12:8

⁸For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Answer: Jesus claimed ownership of the Sabbath.

4b. Mark 6:2

²And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, "Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!

Luke 4:16

¹⁶So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

Answer: When Jesus was in Nazareth, His home town, he went to the synagogue as was his custom and there he participated in the service by reading from the scroll.

4c. Luke 6:1-11

¹Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them*, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. ²And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

³But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?"⁵And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

⁶Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. ⁷So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. ⁸But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, “**Arise and stand here.**” And he arose and stood. ⁹Then Jesus said to them, “**I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?**” ¹⁰And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, “**Stretch out your hand.**” And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. ¹¹But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Answer: Jesus was in the synagogue on the Sabbath when He healed the man with the withered hand.

4d. Luke 23:54 – 24:1

⁵⁴That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

⁵⁵And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. ⁵⁶Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

¹Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

Answer: The 7th day was the Sabbath, the day Jesus lay in the tomb after He died on Friday afternoon.

5a. Acts 13:14-16, 42-44

¹⁴But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. ¹⁵And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”

¹⁶Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: . . .

⁴²So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. ⁴³Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.

Answer: Paul was in the synagogue on Sabbath and he preached to the Jews the first week and then to the Gentiles the following week.

5b. Acts 16:12, 13; 17:1,2; 18:1-4,11

¹²and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. ¹³And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*.

Actes 17:1, 2

¹Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ²Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, . . .

Acts 18:1-4, 11

¹After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. ²And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. ³So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. ⁴And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

¹¹And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

6. Matthew 24:20

²⁰And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Answers: Jesus, looking ahead to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, told the disciples to pray that their flight from Jerusalem not be “on the Sabbath”.

7. Revelation 1:10

¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,”

Mark 2:27, 28

²⁷And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

Exodus 20:10

¹⁰but 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 male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates.

Answer: Jesus, the Creator, gave man the Sabbath and identified Himself as the “Lord of the Sabbath” and John would have identified the Sabbath as “the Lord’s Day”.

8. Isaiah 66:22, 23

²² “For as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord,
“So shall your descendants and your name remain.

²³ And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.

Answer: In the new earth, all the universe will worship God “from one Sabbath to another”.

SUMMARY:

The **CREATOR**, Jesus, gave Adam the Sabbath.

Genesis 2:1-3

¹Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ²And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

The **LAWGIVER**, Jesus, gave Moses the Sabbath.

James 4:12

¹²There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

The **SAVIOUR**, Jesus, kept the Sabbath.

Luke 4:16

¹⁶So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

The **KING of the New Earth**, Jesus, preserves the Sabbath throughout eternity.

Isaiah 66:22, 23

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