

# What The Bible Says About

## The Sabbath & Keeping It



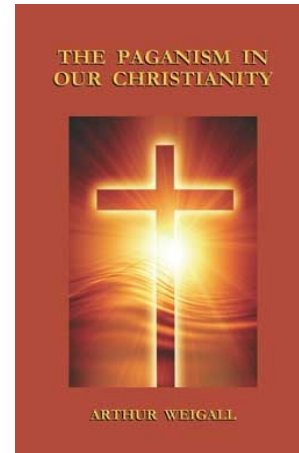
Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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At my last Church a local cult (at a very high postal expense) had sent out some literature to every mailbox in the community. In the literature a number of claims were made.



They said, "**Christians copied the 'Sunday keeping' practices of the pagan religion of Mithraism**" (The Sun Worshipers). Quoting a man by the name of **Arthur Weigall** who wrote **The Paganism in our Christianity**, they wrote "it was a definite Christian policy to take over the pagan festivals

endeared to the people by tradition, and to give them a Christian significance" (pg 136). This same literature went on to quote a so called prophetess by the name of **Ellen G. White** who wrote:

**"Here we find the mark of the beast. The very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, on the part of the Catholic church, without any authority from the Bible."** (Ellen G. White, The Mark of the Beast, page 23)

**"The change of the Sabbath is the sign or mark of the authority of the Romish church." ... "The keeping of the counterfeit Sabbath is the reception of the mark."** (Ellen G. White, Great Controversy, Vol. 4, page 281)

White and other "prophets" of this cult went on to say that those who practiced a Sunday Sabbath were lost and not saved, children of the devil. They stated that only true believers attended Church on *Saturday*, the Jewish

Sabbath. All others were lost.

The young man who contacted me had only been to our Church a time or two, and was one that I would have labeled a *Nominal* or *Cultural* Christian. This type of Christian has no faith in the Lord nor His Bible, and is not effected by what he or she believes.

The young man was frightened by what he read and wanted me to tell him whether this was right or wrong.



When confronted by doctrinal zombies and supercilious seers, rather than run away I run to the Scripture.

**Romans 14:4-10** Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou

**set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**

The Bible tells us not to judge one another on the basis of *special days*. In fact, the Apostle Paul was careful not to condemn those who **esteemed one day above another**, nor to condemn those who **esteem every day alike**. This same type of foolishness popped up in the early Church. Why? Because in the early Church many were saved who had a *Jewish background*, and many others were saved who had a *Gentile background*.

Those with Jewish backgrounds in the early Church practiced a Sabbath, whereas those with Gentile backgrounds did not.

The Apostle said "**Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind**". We live and die unto the Lord. As Christians we shall one day be judged by our Lord. **Whether we live or die, we who are Christians are the Lord's**. Paul's point was this: follow the Lord, not what another brother or sister tells you. Follow the clear teaching of the Word of God. Let's see what the Bible says about the Sabbath.

### **Where Did The "Sabbath" Begin?**

The first use of the word "**Sabbath**" in the Bible is found in **Exodus Chapter Sixteen**. God has saved His Israel, leading them through the Red Sea behind His Prophet Moses. The Armies of Egypt have been destroyed under the waters of the Sea.



**Exodus 14:31** Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

Israel was blessed. Israel is on the way to the Promised Land, but has not yet reached Mount Sinai. God's people begin to complain because they have no bread to eat, so the Lord provides them **manna**, bread from Heaven. He tells them that they are to **each person gather the manna that he or she will eat for one day**. They are to do this every single day, gathering just what they can eat.

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However the Lord told them:

**Exodus 16:23** ... **To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.**

that on the *day before the Sabbath* on this day and this day only they were to *gather a double portion of manna*. The Lord did not want them working on the Sabbath.



Though the Law had not yet been given through Moses, God's Israel was already observing a Sabbath.

**Word Study** The word "Sabbath" is the Hebrew SHABBAT (שַׁבָּת pronounced *shab-bawth'*) or the Greek SABBATA (σαββατον pronounced *sab'-bat-on*). Both words mean "**intermission, repose, rest, relaxation**".

Though the Sabbath had not yet been given to Israel through the Laws of Sinai, it is clear that God's Old Testament people were already practicing a Sabbath. In fact, God established a Sabbath in the Garden of Eden. We read:

**Genesis 2:2-3** **And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.**

**God rested from all His work on the seventh day.** Did He rest because He was *tired and wore out*? Not at all. The Scripture says:

**Isaiah 40:28** **Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?**

God does not get "tired", nor does He take a nap:

**Psalms 121:4 Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.**

The Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament was indicted by the Jews for walking through a corn field and plucking ears to eat on the Sabbath Day.

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Jesus said in **Mark 2:27-28** .... **The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.**

The reason that God established a Sabbath was *for our benefit*. He wanted man to take time off from work and take time to relate to His Creator. This is why when the Lord gave Moses the Law on Tables of stone from Mount Sinai the *Fourth Commandment* states:

**Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them**

**is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.**

God looked backwards to the Garden of Eden, and told Israel that they were to keep the Sabbath just as Adam kept the Sabbath. **In it thou shalt not do any work.**

The Sabbath was given to Israel so that the people of God would rest and take time to worship their Lord and Savior, to grow in their faith in Him.

### **How Many Sabbaths Did Israel Follow?**

**Exodus 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.**

God told Israel, "**My Sabbaths you shall keep**". We know that God by the Law gave Israel a *Seventh Day Sabbath*, but what few people know is that God instituted *other Sabbaths as well*. These Sabbaths were on Jewish Feast days.



**a** The Day of Atonement was in itself a Sabbath.

The Bible says:

**Leviticus 16:29-31 And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: 30 For on that**

# Crucifixion & Resurrection Of Jesus Christ

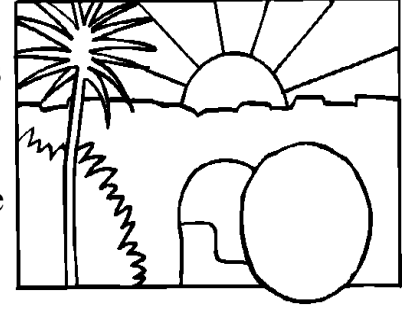
day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto

Our Wednesday	Our Thursday	Our Friday	Our Saturday	Our Sunday
14	15	16	17	18
<b>Passover</b> <small>.John 19:31; Mark 15:42</small>	1 <sup>st</sup> Day Unleavened Bread	2 <sup>nd</sup> Day Unleavened Bread	3 <sup>rd</sup> Day Unleavened Bread	4 <sup>th</sup> Day Unleavened Bread
night sunset	High Sabbath	Unleavened Bread	Weekly Sabbath	Wave Offering
day sunrise	night sunset	night sunset	night sunset	night sunset
	day sunrise	day sunrise	day sunrise	day sunrise
<p>Jesus' trials were at night, a violation of the Mosaic Law. See Matthew 26:57 &amp; Deuterion. 16:18-20</p> <p>Clarke's Commentary, Jesus died (Luke 23:44-45) around the ninth hour, which is our three o'clock in the afternoon</p>	<p>Jesus in the grave three days &amp; three nights as He said</p>			
				 <p>He is not here. He is risen, just as He said Matthew 28:5-6</p>

Lord was crucified He said:

**Matthew 12:40** For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus said that He would be **three days AND three nights** in the heart of the earth (the tomb) just as Jonah was **three days AND three nights** in the belly of the fish. That's as clear as it can be. We also know from the Scripture that the **Chief Priests and Pharisees** - all enemies of Christ - went to **Pilate and demanded that he seal the tomb of Christ and put a guard on it.** They said to Pilate:



**Matthew 27:63-64** .... Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

It is obvious that these evil witnesses understood that Jesus said He was going to be in the grave for three days and nights. Pilate did as they asked, and put a guard on the grave **until the third day**. We know that Jesus said He was going to be in the tomb for three days and three nights. He said it, His enemies heard it. So why is it that

so many Christians believe that Jesus died on "Good Friday" and rose from the Grave on Sunday? There is no way in the world that you can get **"three days and three nights"** from Friday to Sunday - it just can't be done. The reason this error came into the Church is because people have misunderstood the Sabbath mentioned in:

**John 19:31-34** The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

This is not a reference to the weekly *Saturday Sabbath*. Notice the text says **"this Sabbath Day was an HIGH day"**. It was a **special Sabbath**. In fact, it was the **first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread**. Jesus was not crucified on Friday, but rather on *Wednesday*. You might ask, **"Why does this matter?"** It matters because to believe otherwise is to make Jesus out to have told an untruth - something He would never do.

**C** The Feast of Pentecost (also called First Fruits or Weeks) had a special Sabbath day:

**Leviticus 23:21** And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: **ye**

**shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.**

**Numbers 28:26** Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, **ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work:**

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**d** The Feast of Trumpets included a special Sabbath:

**Leviticus 23:25** Ye shall **do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.**



**Numbers 29:1** And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, **ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.**

**e** The Feast of Tabernacles (also called Booths) had a special Sabbath:

**Leviticus 23:35** On the first day shall be **an holy**

**convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.**

**Numbers 29:12** And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days:

In every case I have found in the Scripture the Sabbath had absolutely nothing to do with securing ones salvation. It was a time - whether weekly or a special Feast Day - to stop and build your relationship with the Lord Who saved you.

The Sabbath was always a time of faith building and fellowship with the Lord and your fellow believers.

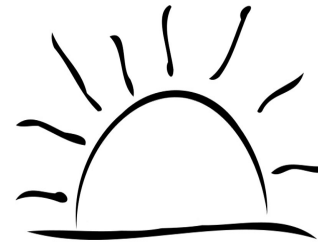
### **If The Seventh Day - Saturday - Is The Sabbath Why Doesn't The Church Meet On The Sabbath?**

One common factor in the various para-Christian cults is that they try to press ritualized days of worship. For instance, the *Seventh Day Adventists* have for years taught that the believer should only worship on Saturday, the Sabbath Day. But these cults themselves don't meet on the Jewish Sabbath.

We need to understand that the Jews do not reckon time like we reckon time.

I quote the following from a Jewish website called **aish.com**. They said:

**"The Jewish day does not begin and end at midnight as does the secular calendar day. Midnight is not a distinguishable astronomic event.** In the era before the modern clock, a specific hour of the night could not be precisely known, whereas an hour of the day was easily determined by sighting the location of the sun. Thus, the day had to begin by precise, simple and universally recognized standards. This meant that the **day had to be reckoned either from the beginning of night or the beginning of day. In Jewish time, the day begins with the onset of night** (the appearance of the stars) followed by the morning (which technically begins with the appearance of the North Star). According to some Jewish



teachers, night and morning begin with sunset and sunrise respectively. For that is how the Torah describes it: "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day." **For this reason, the Sabbath begins on Friday night and ends with the appearance of**

**the stars on Saturday night. The same is true for the major holidays such as Passover, Sukkot, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the fast day of Tisha B'Av, and Hanukkah and Purim.**

<http://www.aish.com/jl/48944546.html>

Jews therefore reckon time from *sunset to sunset*. If you want to worship on the Jewish Sabbath, you would have to start at *sunset on Friday - which is their Sabbath*. You would continue to follow the Sabbath until the *sun set on Saturday*. Most of the cults that shout the loudest about Sabbath Keeping have no idea of this fact.

Why don't we keep the Sabbath? There's several reasons.

**a** **The Sabbath was given to Israel, not the Gentiles.** See **Exodus 20:8-11** and **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**, which specifically addresses the Sabbath to the Jew.

**b** **If we were to keep the Jewish Sabbaths, then we would have to keep them all.** The Lord mandated that Israel keep a *year long Sabbath* where they did not work their land at all, but trusted in the Lord for sustenance. (see **Leviticus 26:33-36**; **2 Chronicles 36:20-21**; **Leviticus 25"3-4**).

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**c** **Israel followed the Mosaic Law as a shadow which taught of things which were to come in Christ.** The Apostle Paul said:

**Colossians 2:16-17** Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Jesus Christ our Lord has come. Israel was given teachings that were a **shadow of things to come**, but we do not have the shadow. We have Christ! The Sabbath -

the Rest of the Christian is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said:

**Matthew 11:28** Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.**

Here is our rest - it is Jesus Christ! This is our Rest. This is the One Who gives us relationship with God.

**d** **The early Church met not on the Sabbath, but on the First Day of the Week.** Why? Because this was the day that the Apostles saw the newly risen Savior and His empty Tomb.

**Mark 16:9** Now **when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.**

**Acts 20:7** **And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.**

The early Church met on the **first Day of the Week, hearing preaching and fellowship.** Not only this but the Apostle Paul ordered the early Church to make its collection for missions on the first day of the week:

**1 Corinthians 16:1-2** Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. **2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when**

**I come.**

We who have been saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are no longer bound to the Sabbath - we are bound to the Savior. We worship on the day He rose from the grave. We love as He loves. We - every single day - rest in our Jesus.

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