

Lifting Up Jesus

#19

THE SABBATH—GOD’S SIGN OF FAITH

As we studied in a previous lesson, we learned that the way of salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. Jesus’ perfect righteousness becomes ours only through faith in Him. God has given us a special sign that reflects not only His Creatorship but also His special relationship with us. In this lesson, we will explore what the Bible teaches on this very important topic.

1. What does Jesus want to give us? Matthew 11:29, 29

2. What day is tied to rest? Hebrews 4:9

3. Which day did God rest from all the work He had done? Genesis 2:1, 2

4. Why did God bless the seventh day and make it holy? Genesis 2:3

Note: God blessed the seventh day and made it holy so that it would be a blessing to His children. In other words, God proclaimed the seventh day to be a special day of rest. God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day.

5. What day was mankind created? Genesis 1:26–31

*Note: God created everything else before He created man. The creation of the world by God was a gift to Adam. Adam celebrated with God in His creation by resting or keeping that day holy. Adam did not help God with creation. However, they celebrated together by resting on the seventh day. Notice that this was God’s seventh day but it was man’s **first** day. Man began his existence by **resting** in the perfect and holy gift of God’s creation.*

6. What day did Jesus die for us on? Luke 23:52–56

Note: Jesus died on ‘preparation day’ commonly referred to it as ‘Good Friday’. Jesus completed our salvation, a complete and perfect work on the sixth day just as God as our Creator also completed His creation for us on the sixth day. Notice that Jesus ‘rested’ in the tomb on the Sabbath day.

7. What day was Jesus resurrected? John 20:1, 2

Note: Jesus was resurrected on the first day or what we call “Easter Sunday”. Just as God rested on the seventh day after His complete and perfect work of creation, God as Jesus once again rested on the seventh day after His complete and perfect work of salvation. Just as God gave us creation as a gift once again God gives us salvation as a gift of which we had no work or effort in helping God with. We are enjoying the fruit of His labour.

8. According to the Bible, what does the observance of the Sabbath day also indicate? Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:11, 12,

Note: The Sabbath is a special sign that it is God who has redeemed us and made us “holy”. The Sabbath points not only to creation but also to man’s redemption. We rest in the complete and perfect gift of God to us.

9. Why did the Jews of the Exodus fail to enter into God’s rest? Hebrews 4:1, 2

Note: The Israelites did not enter God’s rest due to unbelief. They did not trust and depend upon God. Those who accept the gospel through the righteousness of Christ have entered into His rest.

10. When we enter into His rest what have we ceased from? Hebrews 4:10

11. How important is the Sabbath to God? Exodus 20:8–11

12. For whom did Jesus say the Sabbath was created? Mark 2:27

13. What was Jesus' relationship to the Sabbath? Mathew 12:8

14. According to the Bible, what time does the Sabbath begin? Genesis 1:5, 8, 13

Note: According to God, evening and then morning constitute a day. The setting of the sun ushers in a new day to God. Therefore the Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday evening and ends at sunset on Saturday night.

15. Does God ever change His laws or covenants? Psalm 89:34

16. Did Jesus ever change God's law? Mathew 5:17, 18

14. Did Jesus keep the Sabbath day holy? Luke 4:16

15. What about after Jesus' death? What day did the disciples keep holy? Acts 13:42–44

Note: The same day that was Sabbath at creation is the same day we call Sabbath today. Any calendar will tell us that Saturday is the seventh day of the week. Any dictionary will tell us that Saturday is the seventh day of the week. If the Sabbath day had been lost between Moses' time and Jesus' time, Christ would surely have set the record straight. (See Royal letter)

16. Did Jesus think His followers would continue to keep the Sabbath after His death? Matt. 24:20

Note: If God changed the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday why would He be concerned about the Sabbath 40 yrs after His death when Jerusalem was destroyed?

17. How did we start worshipping on Sunday instead of Saturday? Constantine the Great who was emperor of Rome joined the church and became a bishop. He enacted a law that first enjoined Sunday keeping in 321 A.D.

*The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday as a legal duty is a constitution of Constantine in 321 A.D., enacting that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns, and workshops were to be at rest on Sunday, with the exception in favour of those engaged in agricultural labour. **Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th edition, "Sunday"***

After this, other ordinances came in through human instrumentality. Most people today do not even realize that they are following a man-made law first enacted in the fourth century. Is it any wonder that God said “**Remember the Sabbath**”?

18. What does Jesus say we should do if we love Him? John 14:15

19. Is the Sabbath blessing for us today? Hebrews 4:9–11

Note: The Hebrew word “Sabbath” is translated into English by the word “rest”. When we rest on God’s Sabbath day, it signifies we rest from our own works and enter into God’s rest by faith. Our works do not save us. Our salvation is only through the grace of Christ through faith.

Conclusion: The Sabbath is a sign to His people that they may know that it is He who gives them life and salvation. Not only is He their Creator but Saviour. We rest in the perfect and complete work that God has done for us. God did not alter or change the fourth commandment. In fact He says that if you love me, you will obey my commandments. He wants to have a special time with us each week so He can pursue a loving relationship with us. He longs to be our Saviour and friend!¹

¹ Lewis, K. A. (2010). *Lifting up Jesus: Bible Study Lessons*. Walla Walla, WA: Karen Ann Lewis.