

In Genesis 2:1-3 God declared that His work of creation was completed.

1. Thus the heavens and the earth were **finished**, and all the host of them.
2. And on the **seventh day** God **finished** his work that he had done, and he **rested** on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.
3. So **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy**, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

In **Exodus 20:8-11** we read the **4th of the 10 Commandments**.

8. **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**
9. **Six days you shall labor**, and do all your work,
10. **but the seventh day is a Sabbath** to the LORD your God. On it you shall **not do any work**, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.
11. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

The Hebrew word for "sabbath" is *shabbat* (שַׁבָּת) which means "ceasing".

God's work of **creation was complete** and **God ceased from creating** new categories of things in his universe.

To remember God's work we are commanded to cease from our labors after working 6 days.

On those 6 days we're to **act as God's managers of the world** which **promotes his glory and care**.

In **Genesis 1:28** God told Adam to **subdue the earth and to rule over it**.

This subduing and ruling means to **make responsible use of it**.

The next verses explain that **this work is to provide for our daily needs**.

The Sabbath rest was about what happened at the time of creation so it isn't from the later ceremonial laws.

Jesus made it clear in **Matthew 5** that though he fulfilled the levitical laws like sacrifices,

the moral laws of God summarized in the 10 Commandments are always to be obeyed.

In Matthew 5:19 Jesus said, "Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments

and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven,

but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

There are exceptions explaining what we can still do on the Sabbath.

It's to be a day of worship.

Worship involves many things that need to be done on the Sabbath.

Those who lead God's people in worship are **very busy** on that day.

The work of worship was never considered labor in God's word.

Those ordained to serve God's Kingdom leading Sabbath worship are **supported by tithes** of those under their care.

It's not considered an "hourly wage" for labor.

Works of necessity for life are not a violation of the Sabbath.

In Matthew 12:1-8 Jesus corrected some criticisms made against his disciples.

The corrupted religious leaders accused Jesus and his disciples of breaking the Sabbath.

They picked grain to eat while walking through a field.

Jesus explained that **eating and preparing our daily food was never forbidden by God**.

It's **wrong to buy or sell food on the Sabbath**, but it's **not wrong to prepare meals**.

You need to feed yourself, and guests in your home.

It's also our obligation to **keep the peace** by **protecting against crime and aggression**.

We're **not to close police stations**, or give our **armed forces a day off**.

We don't let criminals run loose, or **leave crashed cars dangerously scattered on roads** until Monday.

To **avoid buying on the Sabbath**, you can **prepare before Sabbath comes**.

Be sure your car is gassed up, and your refrigerator and cupboards are supplied adequately.

Police Departments should avoid doing routine office work on the Sabbath,

while they continue to protect the population against illegal activity.

Churches should do their regular office work on the other six days and restrict Sabbath activity to worship.

The Sabbath should be a day for doing **works of mercy.**

These are activities that **show our compassion and love for the truly needy.**

This includes helping or comforting the lonely, sick, and infirm, or rescuing those in danger.

Hospitals and nursing care centers don't close down on Sundays hoping those under their care survive until Monday.

In Matthew 12:10-14 Jesus used an example to show that **mercy was never forbidden in God's Sabbath law.**

No one was expected to leave **sheep that fall into a pit** to suffer and die on the Sabbath.

In Luke 13:12-17 he said that we do not stop caring for our ox or donkey because it is the Sabbath.

In both passages Jesus was being criticized for healing someone on the Sabbath Day.

There are **emergencies** that come up which ought to be taken care of.

These activities stand **in contrast with our regular labor by which we earn our living.**

It's that regular labor that's forbidden on the Sabbath Day.

To do it is open rebellion, and disregards one of God's most basic commands.

This Commandment holds you responsible if you cause others to break the Sabbath.

The commandment in Exodus 20:10 says, "**but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.**

On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates."

It's our duty to see that those we care for or pay to serve us are able to keep the Sabbath Day holy.

This applies to our children, our servants (all those we hire to work for us, those we pay to serve us), even the animals we might use to get our work done, and any guest who is staying with us.

The employer, not the worker, bears the greater responsibility for Sabbath rest.

In Egypt, Israel was held as a nation of slaves. They were not permitted to keep the Sabbath holy.

God held their captors and taskmasters guilty. For that they paid a heavy price.

Workers should do their best to not work on the Sabbath.

If they are required to do so by threats, the employer faces God's judgment for this sin.

We should not support paid Sabbath labor performed for our own pleasure, rest, or personal gain.

This was always the practice of God's people until very recent times.

The Reformers suffered greatly for opposing businesses being open on the Lord's Day.

As much as it goes against our modern culture and the accepted practices in some churches,

paying others to work for us when we go to restaurants, professional sports games, commercial tourist attractions, or stores to shop on the Lord's Day is wrong, even if it's to take advantage of special sales or promotions.

If all believers in Christ stopped paying others to serve them or to sell to them on Sundays, many businesses would find it more profitable to be closed on the Lord's Day.

What day of the week did God set aside? Saturday? Sunday?

There was no universally accepted calendars with named week days back then. That came much later in human history.

Even in today's Hebrew language the days of the week are numbered, not named.

The week begins with Day One, after that Day Two, and so on.

After Day Six, the next day is not called Day Seven, but Sabbath (Shabbat), the day of ceasing.

There's Hebrew children's song about the week days ...

Yom rishon, avodah (Day 1 we work) - Yom sheini, avodah (Day 2 we work).

Yom shlishi, avodah avodah (Day 3 we work, we work) - Yom r'vi'i, avodah (Day 4 we work)

Yom chamishi, avodah (Day 5 we work) - Yom shishi, avodah, avodah (Day 6 we work, we work)

Yom Shabbat yom simchah (Day Sabbath we rejoice), Yom Shabbat yom rinah (Day Sabbath we ringing out),

Yom Shabbat m'nucha, m'nucha (Day Sabbath we rest, we rest).

There is no way of knowing which day of our present week the original Sabbath Day first fell upon.

Before the time of Moses, for thousands of years, God's people worked 6 days then stopped for one day to honor God.

After the Exodus, **God added Ceremonial Sabbaths** along with the Creation Sabbath.

These Ritual Sabbaths foreshadowed the **rest God's people would one day have in Christ.**

They represented the **spiritual rest** believers will have by being set free from sin's guilt after the Cross.

In Leviticus 23 there was a double Sabbath each year. Did the 7-Day Work Cycle start up again?

There are different theories about how the calendar adjusted or fit in with different cultures the Jews lived in.

It was **in the time of the Ancient Roman Calendar** that the **Jews fixed the Sabbath to the Roman Saturday.**

Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the Roman week.

Jesus fulfilled everything the Ritual Sabbaths of the Levitical Period illustrated,

Their purpose was completed and they were no longer binding upon anyone.

However, **the purpose of the Creation Sabbath continues as long as creation exists.**

This is what Paul was referring to in Colossians 2:16-17 where he said,

“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. **These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.**”

This comment was about the end of the Levitical Ritual Sabbaths.

They were the Sabbaths that were **a shadow of what Christ would do.**

Once redemption was accomplished at the cross, the church started gathering for Sabbath worship on Sundays.

The change was to remember the day on which Jesus rose from the dead.

That marked a new start for the 7-day cycle. It did not end that cycle.

The Apostles appointed by Jesus directed the Church to meet on the first day of the week for Sabbath worship.

We see this practice in effect in several passages in the New Testament, for example: Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2.

Early records from the first centuries of the church confirm that **this apostolic practice continued.**

Ignatius of Antioch (who personally knew the Apostles) said, Christians were,

“no longer observing the seventh day, but living in the observance of the Lord’s day,...”

Justin Martyr (who lived in the 3rd century) said,

“the day called **Sunday** is an assembly of all who live either in cities or in rural districts ...

because Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead upon it.”

It's our duty to remember to honor the Sabbath as the 4th Commandment teaches us.

We shouldn't just celebrate Sabbath on Sunday mornings during church worship.

It's to be **a whole day of keeping in mind the work of our Creator, and the resurrection of our Savior.**

The Bible quotations in this article are from the **English Standard Version** of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

ESV

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