

QUESTION: Must Christians Keep the Sabbath? Is Worshiping on Saturday (the Sabbath) Necessary to Go to Heaven?

ANSWER: NO, for several reasons. Reason #1 - The Sabbath was a "sign" between God and ISRAEL, and we as Christians are NOT Israel (we are the Body of Christ). Reason #2 - Keeping the Sabbath is part of keeping the Law, and the Bible tells us over and over again that we are saved by GRACE through FAITH, as a FREE GIFT from God, not by the works of the law. Reason #3 - The Sabbath was originally to be a day of physical rest for humans as well as their animals. It was a health law for the Israelites, not a religious law relating to their worship of God. Reason #4 - The early church was never required to keep the Sabbath or any of the Jewish laws for salvation.

Reason #1 - The sabbath was a "sign" between God and ISRAEL, and we as Christians are NOT Israel (we are the Body of Christ).

- Read Exodus 31:13-17** (Verse 15) "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy (set apart) to the Lord; whoever does any work on the sabbath shall surely be put to death." (Verse 17) "**It is a sign between Me and the SONS of ISRAEL** forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed."
- Ephesians 1:22-23** "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to **the CHURCH, which is His BODY**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."
- Ephesians 2:11-18** "Therefore remember that you, who were once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by those who are called the Circumcision, in the flesh, made by human hands — that at that time, you [*Gentiles*] were without Christ, being ALIENS from the commonwealth (blessings) of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off, have been **made near by the blood of Christ**. For He is our peace, who has made both ONE, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, **having ABOLISHED in His flesh the enmity, that is the LAW of COMMANDMENTS** contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself **one new man [the Body of Christ]** from the two [*Jews & Gentiles*], thus making peace, and that He might RECONCILE them both to God in **one BODY** through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off (the Gentiles), and to those who were near (the Jews/Israel). For **through Him** we both have **access by one Spirit to the Father.**"

Definition: "Enmity" — Hostility, being an **enemy**. We were enemies of God because we can never KEEP His **laws** and **commandments**, but **Jesus ABOLISHED**, through His death on the CROSS, the NECESSITY for us to keep the Law, along with its penalty (Gal. 2:15).

Reason #2 - Keeping the Sabbath is part of keeping the Law, and the Bible tells us over and over again that we are saved by GRACE through FAITH, as a FREE GIFT from God, not by the works of the law.

Read Galatians 2:4-16 (Verse 16) "Knowing that a man is **not JUSTIFIED** by the **works of the law** but by FAITH in Jesus Christ, even we have BELIEVED in Christ Jesus, that we might be JUSTIFIED by faith in CHRIST and **not** by the **works of the LAW**; for by the WORKS of the law (keeping the Old Testament commandments) no flesh shall be JUSTIFIED."

Read Galatians 3:1-14 (Verse 5) "He therefore who supplies (**gives**) to you the **SPIRIT**, and works miracles among you, does He do it by the **works of the law**, or by the hearing of **FAITH**?"

•**Read Romans 5:6-17** (verse 15-16) "But **the FREE GIFT** is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense (Adam's sin) many died, much more **the GRACE of God**, and

the GIFT by the GRACE of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many, and the GIFT is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but **the FREE GIFT** which came from many offenses **resulted in justification.**"

•**Read Romans 3:21-28** (Verse 24) "Being justified freely (as a gift) by His GRACE through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Verse 28) "Therefore we conclude that a man is **JUSTIFIED by FAITH apart** from the deeds of the **LAW.**"

Definition: "JUSTIFIED" — Justification or the **ACT of being justified** means that God by His GRACE **declares us RIGHTEOUS** when we believe on Jesus Christ, even while we are still in our **SINFUL** state. It is **NOT a process of becoming** righteous, **it is a ONE-TIME ACT of GRACE** — we are **MADE RIGHTEOUS** the moment we accept Jesus as our Savior! (See II Cor. 5:21) It is **NOT** merely **FORGIVENESS**, although forgiveness is **INCLUDED** — God does indeed **FORGIVE AND FORGET OUR SINS**. However, **JUSTIFICATION means God even FORGETS THAT WE WERE EVER SINNERS!** There is **NO MORE RECORD** of our sins.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by **GRACE** you have been saved **through FAITH**, and that not of yourselves, it is **the GIFT of God; NOT of WORKS**, lest anyone should boast."

Definition: "GRACE" — Unmerited or **UNEARNED** favor. **Being accepted and loved by God** when we have done **NOTHING** and **CAN DO NOTHING** to **EARN** or **DESERVE** it.

Titus 3:5-7 "**NOT by works of righteousness** which we have **DONE**, but according to His mercy **He saved us**; by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through **Jesus Christ our Savior**. That having been **JUSTIFIED** by His **GRACE** we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life"

Romans 6:15 "What then? Shall we sin because we are **NOT under LAW but under GRACE?** Certainly not!"

Definition: "Not UNDER LAW but UNDER GRACE" — We are saved by **GRACE through our FAITH** (see Ephesians 2:8-9), and **NOT** by our works or by keeping the Old Testament Law (including Sabbath-keeping), but that does **NOT** give us **LICENSE** to **SIN** or to live any old way that we please. We **SHOULD** do good works and be **OBEDIENT** to what we know God wants us to do, but as Christians, we are **NOT** to put ourselves back under the Old Testament Law or **any other form of LEGALISM, RITUALS or keeping ORDINANCES**. No **SYSTEM** of **LAWS** or **RULES** can make a person **HOLY**. Being "**UNDER GRACE**" means we are to serve God out of the **motivation of LOVE and GRATITUDE**, and by the **POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT!!**

•**Read Galatians 3:16-25** (Verse 19) "**What PURPOSE then does the LAW serve?** It was added because of transgressions (sins), till the Seed (Christ - see verse 16) should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator." (Verse 21) "Is the **LAW** then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a **LAW** given which could have given **LIFE**, truly righteousness (**SALVATION**) would have been by the law." (Verse 23) "But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, **kept for the FAITH which would afterward be revealed** (when Christ came)."

•**Romans 4:5** "But to him **who does not WORK** (doing good deeds in order to try to earn salvation) but **BELIEVES** on Him who **JUSTIFIES** the ungodly, his **FAITH** is accounted for **RIGHTEOUSNESS.**"

•**Romans 5:20** "Moreover **the LAW** entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, **GRACE ABOUNDED** much more."

Definition: "The LAW ENTERED that the OFFENSE might abound" — "The Law" refers to the Old Testament Law and commandments God gave to Moses and the Israelites. Keeping the Old Testament Law could **NEVER** give a person eternal life. **Salvation and eternal life HAS ALWAYS BEEN by FAITH in GOD**. The Law serves the purpose of **SHOWING US HOW FAR WE ARE FROM GOD'S PERFECT STANDARD**, and thus shows us that we **CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES**, and that **we NEED A SAVIOR!!** **The Law DEFINES SIN**, shows us how sinful we are, how destructive sin is in our lives, and how **HORRIBLE** sin is in God's sight.

Reason #3 - The Sabbath was originally to be a day of physical rest for humans as well as their animals. It was a health law for the Israelites, not a religious law relating to their worship of God.

•**Exodus 23:12** "Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease (stop) from labor; **in order that your ox and your donkey may REST**, and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger (foreigner), **may REFRESH themselves.**"

God's law that He gave to Israel through Moses said that NO WORK was to be done on the Sabbath Day. In Jesus' day, the Pharisees had ADDED many rules and regulations to God's original law, including definitions of what constituted "work" and how many steps you could walk on the Sabbath, etc. Instead of being a day **to rest and refresh yourself**, they had made it a day of horrible rules to keep, and people were afraid of "breaking the Sabbath rules" (see Matthew 23:1-4). The Sabbath Day and the penalty of death were given to the "sons of Israel." We, as Christians **under the New Covenant**, are **NOT under the Sabbath Law** with its penalty, but the PRINCIPLE of taking a day to rest and be refreshed, and to set that day apart for the Lord, is still applicable. However, it is only a **rule for good health**, it is **not** a requirement for salvation!

Luke 22:20 "And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup is the **NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD**, which is shed for you.'"

Reason #4 - The early church was NEVER required to KEEP the SABBATH or ANY of the Jewish laws for salvation.

•**Read Acts 15:1-29** (Verse 1) "And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, **you CANNOT be SAVED.**'" (Verses 5-11) "But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them, and **to COMMAND them to KEEP the LAW of MOSES.**' So the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the GENTILES should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, PURIFYING their HEARTS **by FAITH.** Now therefore, **why do you TEST GOD** (see Matthew 4:7) by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that **through the GRACE of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be SAVED** in the same manner as they.'" (Verses 24, 28-29) "Since we have heard that some who went out from us have TROUBLED you with words, UNSETTLING your SOULS, saying, 'You must be circumcised and **KEEP the LAW**' — to whom **we gave NO SUCH COMMANDMENT.....**" "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from [*eating or drinking*] blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, **YOU WILL DO WELL.**" (Notice, it says "do well", not "be saved")