

Christians And The Sabbath Day

We need to start here by stating what the Lord God said to the Israelites; “Six days you shall labour (serve) but on the seventh day you shall rest (Shabbat)” (Exodus 34:21).

Looking deeper into the meaning of the word Sabbath, or in Hebrew; the Shabbat (pronounced Shubbut), we see that it was never given as an instruction to Christians; it was given only to the Israelites. The Israelites were to serve God for six days and rest (from God’s service) on the seventh day. The Shabbat was given to them, to rest and spend time worshipping God. It was a holy day for the Hebrews to remember God and all He had done for them. ‘Wherefore the Israelites shall keep the Shabbat to observe it throughout their generations, a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the Israelites forever; for in six days the Lord created the heavens and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased and was refreshed’ (Exodus 31:16 & 17). Many modern Christians think it applies to them too, but the New Testament shows us the Gentile Christians did not celebrate Shabbat – only the Jews did, and they still do.

The Jewish Shabbat is a very joyous, musical celebration, where they invite strangers into their homes and provide an abundance of foods, making the stranger feel loved and welcome. Shabbat starts at sundown on Friday evening with the lighting of candles and prayer. Then they have the breaking of bread and wine (consecrated grape juice) and instructions regarding the Shabbat and the bread and wine. After that they have the wonderful Jewish music, teaching from the Torah (Old Testament) and food – and lots of it. It is a very Jewish celebration and when the Messianic Jews, or Spirit-filled Jews celebrate their Shabbat, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is tangible. The whole celebration is nothing like the Christian church service – at all.

Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and He had the very first meeting with His disciples on the first day of the week, so Jesus Himself started the brand new church with that very first meeting on a Sunday, and the apostles continued with that theme (Matthew 28:1 & 6; Mark 16:2, 6 & 9; Luke 24:1 & 6; John 20:1 & 19). ‘Now after the Shabbat, near dawn of the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary (Jesus’ mother) went to take a look at the tomb’ (In Matthew 28:1). The Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. So the sentence that reads ‘after the Shabbat, near dawn of the first day of the week’ tells us that it was the early morning after the end of Shabbat – Sunday morning. That is why the Gentile Christians in the New Testament, assembled to worship God on the first day of the week – Sunday – never on the Shabbat. ‘And on the first day of the week when we were assembled together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them...’ (Acts 20:7).

‘On the first day of each week, let each one of you put aside something and save it up as he has prospered, so that no collections will need to be taken after I come’ (1 Corinthians 16:2).

‘Again He sets a definite day; a new Today, and gives another opportunity of securing that rest...’ (Hebrews 4:7). In the early church days, there were people who tried to insist Christians meet on the Shabbat. But Paul dismissed them and said they were not to insist they meet on the Shabbat. ‘Therefore let no one sit in judgement on you, in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath. Such things are only the shadow of things that are to come, and they have only a symbolic value’ (Colossians 2:16 & 17).

‘A symbolic value’ Paul says. It is no longer part of the law because Jesus said He was Lord even of the Shabbat Day (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28 and Luke 6:5). The Jews celebrate it as part of their covenant with God – not as part of the law. Some people use the Ten Commandments as their guide, thinking somehow they will please God if they attend church on a Saturday morning, but Jesus introduced Sunday morning as the day for Christians to assemble together. If there is a Jewish community near you, see if you can attend their true Shabbat celebration. You will be so blessed and refreshed.

Amen and God bless you.

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