

SHOULD CHRISTIANS KEEP THE SABBATH?

Note to the speaker:

Emphasize that the Sabbath was a time to rejoice and to praise God. Stress that Christians enter into God's rest by trusting in his promises, putting spiritual interests first, and living in harmony with his ways every day

DIFFERING VIEWS ABOUT THE SABBATH (2 min.)

Many in Christendom regard Sunday as a holy day, and others, Saturday (*g81 1/8 26*)

Such "holy days" have increasingly become simply days of leisure

To understand what the Bible Sabbath means for Christians, we must know what it was originally

THE SABBATH WAS GIVEN FOR MAN'S BENEFIT (15 min.)

The term "sabbath" comes from a Hebrew verb meaning "rest, cease, desist" (*rs 345*)

Jehovah gave the Sabbath as "a sign" between him and the sons of Israel (Read Exodus 31:16, 17)

It was a day set aside by God for his people to rest from labor

The weekly Sabbath was part of a system of sabbaths (*it-2 830-1*)

Observing the sabbaths in a wholehearted way was vital to Israel's existence as a nation

Failure to honor Sabbath laws contributed to the nation's downfall

The land of Judah lay desolate for 70 years to pay back its Sabbath years (2Ch 36:20, 21; *it-2 834*)

Such years provided opportunity for the land to renew itself

The weekly Sabbath was to be a blessing, not a burden (Mr 2:27)

Gave both man and domestic animals rest and refreshment

It was a sacred day, an occasion to attend to spiritual needs (De 5:12)

Reminded Israel of liberation from Egypt, where they had found no rest (De 5:14, 15)

Gave parents time to teach their children about God (De 6:6, 7; *it-2 831*)

A more important aspect of the sabbath arrangement was the opportunity it gave to show faith in Jehovah and his ability to provide (*it-2 831*)

No work was to be done on Sabbath days, and no cultivating during Sabbath years (Le 25:4)

Nation had to rely on Jehovah for provisions (*it-2 830*)

Jehovah was interested in heart appreciation, not perfunctory observance (Read Isaiah 58:13, 14)

Israelites showed faith when they devoted the Sabbath day to Jehovah

He blessed Israelites for obeying out of faith and love

THE END OF THE SABBATH SYSTEM (10 min.)

Over the centuries, Jewish religious leaders added burdensome Sabbath restrictions (*w93 2/15 27*)

Jesus denounced them for voiding the purpose of the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8; Lu 13:10-16)

The Mosaic Law was replaced by "a new covenant" (Jer 31:31-33; Lu 22:20; Heb 8:13)

Christ's ransom sacrifice took the Mosaic Law "out of the way" (Col 2:13, 14)

Faith in Christ Jesus is now the only basis for righteousness (Ro 10:4; *w93 2/15 29*)

No one can gain God's approval merely by complying with certain rules (*rs 350*)

In the Scriptures no division exists between the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Mosaic Law (*it-2 832*)

Whole system of Sabbaths, including the Sabbath day, ended (Ro 14:5; Col 2:16, 17)

CHRISTIANS TODAY BENEFIT BY ENTERING INTO GOD'S REST (15 min.)

Though Israel failed to enter into God's rest, Christians do so through faith and obedience (Read Hebrews 4: 8, 9) (*w98 7/15 18*)

Faith in ransom removes burden of sin, thus easing conscience (Heb 9:14; *w99 5/15 24*)

Dedicated Christians "rest" by putting God's interests first, rather than selfish interests (*rs 349-50*)

Do our utmost to avoid disobeying God (Heb 4:11)

Trust in God, letting nothing interfere with an approved relationship with him (Heb 13:5, 6)

Keep focused on the Kingdom, relegating anxieties to the background (Mt 6:19, 22, 33; *w93 12/15 27*)

Use whatever opportunities are available to praise Jehovah (Eph 5:15, 16)

Christian meetings are part of a healthy spiritual routine (Heb 3:13; 10:24)

Godly families benefit spiritually by using time wisely

Regularly reading and discussing God's Word as a family helps to safeguard children's eternal future (Pr 22:6; Mt 4:4)

YOU CAN GAIN THE BLESSINGS OF THE SABBATH (3 min.)

Even now, we can benefit daily by entering into God's rest (*w91 2/15 24*)

Showing faith and obedience will result in blessings, as God promised Israel (De 28:13)

Christ, "Lord of the sabbath," will soon begin his Thousand Year Reign (Mt 12:8; Re 20:2-4)

That reign will be like a period of sabbath rest (*it-2 833*)

Through it, ransom benefits will be fully realized (*w99 4/15 12*)

It will bring complete relief to the earth and to all faithful mankind (Re 21:1-4)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)

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TO BE COVERED IN 45 MINUTES

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