

For Note-Takers: Underline any words or phrases which stand out to you. Circle words or phrases that you have a question about.

1. After creating the world in six days, God rested from all the work that He had done in Creation. For a full day He no longer did this specific work. But even though he rested, God still cared for His creation. Because without God’s sustaining care, the world He had created would have ceased to exist. Having finished His work in these six days, God blessed this seventh day and made it holy. This “Sabbath” day would be the example for God’s people, pointing them to the time when one day they would have rest in His Son Jesus Christ.
 2. After God led His people out of Egypt and into the desert, He supplied their needs by raining “manna” from the sky. Moses directed them to gather this special bread and use it to feed them and their families. Because of God’s provision, whatever each of them gathered was enough to supply for all their needs. But even though they had everything they needed for each day, the people tried to gather extra for themselves. Moses grew angry with them because of their greed and lack of trust in God to supply for their needs when the next day came.
 3. Every morning God supplied for the needs of His people during their exodus through the desert on the way to the promised land. God provided enough food so that each person could eat until they were full, but on the sixth day of the week they were able to gather twice as much food as they needed for one day. So, Moses told them that the next day would be a holy Sabbath to the Lord. This was the first time since the seventh day of the Creation week that God’s people would celebrate a Sabbath. They were to gather the bread for only six days and God would give them enough on the sixth day so that they could rest from their work of gathering on the Sabbath.
 4. Some of the people disobeyed God’s command to rest in His provision on the seventh day of the week. This angered God because of their refusal to obey His commandment to trust in His provision and rest on the Sabbath. God pointed out to Moses that He had given them the blessing of the Sabbath and provided for His people’s rest.
- The first Sabbath that Israel celebrated was a gift from God that He had given them during their travels through the desert.
5. Later on, after God had given His people Israel His Laws that they were to obey, God instructed Moses to emphasize the importance of keeping His Sabbaths every week on the seventh day. The Sabbath would be a sign between God and His people so that they would know of His provision in sanctifying them, or making them His chosen people. Because of the Holiness of God, the Sabbath rest must be kept Holy. Anyone who intentionally profaned, or broke, His Sabbath Law would be put to death and cut off from His people. Those who worked on the seventh day, failing to trust in God’s provision of a Sabbath rest, were failing to remember that God was the One who Created them, both physically, in the beginning in six days, and spiritually, as a people through His covenant. Israel’s Sabbath rest on the seventh day pointed to God’s Sabbath rest after His work of Creation.
 6. God commanded in His Law that if someone were to commit an unintentional sin against Him, then He would accept atonement for their sin through a sacrifice made by the priest and they would be forgiven. This Law applied both to the people of Israel and those who came in peace to sojourn among them. But if someone were to willfully break God’s Law then they would face the strictest penalty because they had despised God’s Word and broken His commandment.
 7. The people of Israel then found a man intentionally gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. His act was a brazen denial of the Sabbath Law. By seeking to provide for himself by gathering sticks on the seventh day when God had promised to make that provision, the man was acting in rebellion against God Himself. Moses sought God’s guidance on what the punishment should be for breaking the Sabbath and God commanded the people to put him to death by stoning.

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*“If you honor the Sabbath, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure, then you shall take
delight in the Lord.”*

Paraphrase of Isaiah 58:13-14

8. For the people of God, the breaking of God’s Sabbath command is a desire for their own sinful pleasure during His Holy day. Those who take delight in God’s provision during the Sabbath day are honoring His ways instead of seeking their own pleasure. The external act of violating the Sabbath is the fruit of an internal heart that does not delight in God Himself. God promises to bless those whose heart is set on delighting in Him through their obedience to the Sabbath. Though God does require physical obedience to His Law, it is the condition of the heart that most pleases God.
9. God again confirms that He gave His Sabbaths to Israel as a gift that would point to His desire to sanctify them, or set them apart as His people. But Israel had responded by rebelling against His commands and not walking in obedience to Him. They had finally rebelled by profaning His Sabbaths. Their pleasure was in their own desires and not those of God. God then placed them under His wrath, desiring to put them under judgment for their great sins against Him.
10. However, instead of acting to destroy them completely, God desired to uphold the Holiness of His great name, which He had given to His people, Israel. But He decided that He would no longer give His people the promised blessings at that time because they had rejected Him and profaned His Sabbaths. Even though they had gone after idols in their hearts, God decided to spare them and not destroy them completely in the wilderness. The

people of Israel would continue to turn away from God even after His mercy, but a greater mercy has come in the form of the Gospel of their Messiah, Jesus Christ.

How should Christians handle the Sabbath Law?

We have four options that I can see:

Application #1

1. The first option is we can try to obey the Sabbath Law literally, as the Old Testament Jews did, with an eye to an external obedience. If we do this, we must not intentionally do any work on the seventh day of the week, Saturday, at all. If anyone does, the penalty would be death by stoning or, alternatively, excommunication from the church.

Application #2

2. The second option is we can try and modify the Sabbath Law and apply it in a different way to the Church, with an eye to both external and internal obedience that is totally different than what the Jews did. Thus, we can claim to obey this Law by worshipping on Sunday, but no longer applying the other components of the Law. There would be no real penalty for disobedience except the spiritual discipline of Christ.

Application #3

3. The third option is we can totally ignore the Sabbath Law both literally and spiritually, with the claim that Jesus did not follow it and thus He abolished this part of the Law with His authority as the Messiah and as God. There would no longer be any penalty for breaking or ignoring the Sabbath Law.

But what did Jesus do? Did Jesus follow the Sabbath or not?

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Application #4

4. Finally, our best option is to try and understand, through the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, the true meaning and intent of God’s Law as a whole, and specifically how a Christian can obey Christ by living the way He did on the Sabbath, and living the way that He did every day, both externally on the outside and internally in our heart. The penalty for continued disobedience to Christ would be to demonstrate that we have not truly put our faith in Him and ultimately, we will face His judgment in eternal Hell.

Genesis 2:2-3

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.

Exodus 16:15-20

¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’” ¹⁷ And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸ But when they measured it with an omer, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat. ¹⁹ And Moses said to them, “Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.” ²⁰ But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

“And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep My commandments and My Laws? See! The Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days.”

(Exodus 16:28-29)

[The Lord said,] “It is a sign forever between Me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”

(Exodus 31:17)

Exodus 16:21-26

²¹ Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat; but when the sun grew hot, it melted. ²² On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, ²³ he said to them, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.’” ²⁴ So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. ²⁵ Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. ²⁶ Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.”

Exodus 16:27-30

²⁷ On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. ²⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹ See! The Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two

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days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.”³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day.

Exodus 31:12-17

¹² And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³ “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

Numbers 15:27-31

²⁷ “If one person sins unintentionally, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering. ²⁸ And the priest shall make atonement before the Lord for the person who makes a mistake, when he sins unintentionally, to make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven. ²⁹ You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the people of Israel and for the stranger who sojourns among them. ³⁰ But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the Lord, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. ³¹ Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him.”

Numbers 15:32-36

³² While the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. ³³ And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. ³⁴ They put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him. ³⁵ And the Lord said to Moses, “The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” ³⁶ And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as the Lord commanded Moses.

Isaiah 58:13-14

¹³ “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; ¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Ezekiel 20:12-13

¹² Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. ¹³ But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. “Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to make a full end of them.

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“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.’”

(Numbers 15:35)

[The Lord said,] “But I acted for the sake of My Name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out.”

(Ezekiel 20:14)

Ezekiel 20:14-17

¹⁴ But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out.

¹⁵ Moreover, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land that I had given them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands, ¹⁶ because they rejected my rules and did not walk in my statutes, and profaned my Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. ¹⁷ Nevertheless, my eye spared them, and I did not destroy them or make a full end of them in the wilderness.