

law. It does not include any command to keep the Sabbath. Therefore, to keep the Sabbath today is to act without divine authority.

#### Ceremonial Law versus Moral Law

Many who would bind the Sabbath today say that only the “ceremonial law” or the “law of Moses” was fulfilled and abolished by Jesus. They contend the “moral law” or the “law of God,” the Ten Commandments continues to have authority. The Bible makes no distinction between the “law of Moses” and the “law of God” or between the “ceremonial law” and the “moral law” because no difference exists. For example, Ezra 7:6 says God had given “the law of Moses” while 2 Chronicles 34:14 states that the “law of the Lord” was “given by Moses.”

The Old Law, in its entirety, has been taken out of the way and is not to be kept today. No one is to be judged “in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths” for those things were but “a shadow of things to come.” (Colossians 2:16-17)

When one seeks to bind the things of the Old Law today, he severs any relationship he might have with Christ and falls from grace. (Galatians 5:4)

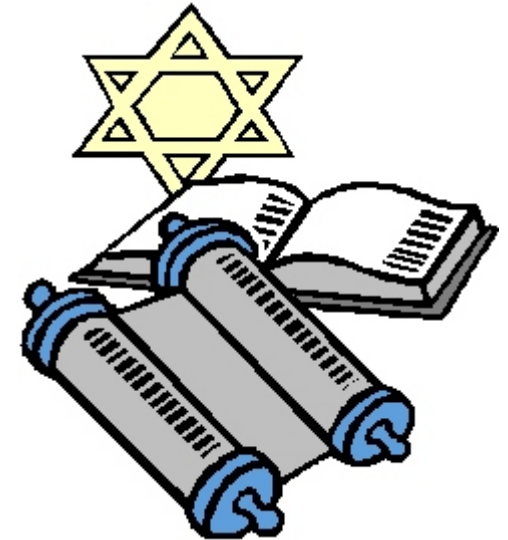
The only “Sabbath rest” remaining for the children of God is the one awaiting them in heaven. (Hebrews 4:9) It is a time when they may “rest from their labors.” (Revelation 14:13) 🕊️

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“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come...”  
(Colossians 2:16-17)

## Are Christians to Keep



## the Sabbath?

Gene Taylor

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# Are Christians to Keep the Sabbath?

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Many people are confused today about what they should do in relation to the Sabbath.

Some feel the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, is still the day of worship. Some believe it is to be observed but that it is now the first day of the week. Others acknowledge Sabbath-keeping to have been abolished along with the rest of the law of Moses and that now, under the law of Christ, the first day of the week has a significance all its own and bears no relationship to the Sabbath.

With people having such diverse views, it is easy to see why there is a great deal of confusion surrounding the Sabbath. The only way to clear that confusion is to go to the Bible and see what it says about the Sabbath.

## The Sabbath Was for Israel

During the exodus from Egypt, God instituted the Sabbath for the Israelites, His chosen people under the Old Law. It is first mentioned in Exodus 16:23 in connection with the manna He sent to feed them while they were on the journey from Egypt to Canaan. The command to keep the Sabbath was one of the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:8) It is important to note that God did not, as some suppose, require its observance at the time of the creation of the world. There is no record of such a command or an example of anyone

observing it prior to the time of Moses and the Israelites.

God commanded Israel to observe the Sabbath so that they would remember that while in Egypt they had no rest but that He had delivered them from their bondage and given them a day of rest. (Deuteronomy 5:15) It was to be a sign between them and God so that they would never forget that it was He who had delivered them and sanctified them as a people for His possession. (Exodus 31:13-17)

In that it was a sign between Israel and God, a memorial of an event peculiar to the Jewish nation and a part of the covenant between them and God, one must conclude that only they were to keep it. If Jew and Gentile alike were to observe it, it would have had no real significance to the Jews.

It would have made no sense for the Gentiles to keep it because it would have had no meaning to them. They were never delivered from Egyptian bondage. Thus, they were never commanded to keep it or any other command contained in the law God gave to Israel through Moses.

The Jews, on the other hand, were to strictly observe it. They were not to work on it. (Exodus 31:13-17; 20:8-11; 23:9-12; 34:21) They were not to gather, bake or boil any food.

(Exodus 16:23-26) No fire was to be kindled (Exodus 35:1-3) and no sticks could be gathered for a fire (Numbers 16:32-35). They were not to buy or sell. (Nehemiah 13:15-21) They could bear no burden. (Jeremiah 17:21-22) They were to travel only a "Sabbath Day's journey." (Matthew 24:20) There was to be a holy convocation) (Leviticus 23:3) and the priests were to sacrifice two lambs of the first year without spot and blemish and two-tenths of an ephah of flour mingled with oil (Numbers 28:9-10).

No one who seeks to bind the observance of the Sabbath today desires to keep it in its entirety. To attempt to keep any portion of it today, though, would put one under obligation to keep not only all aspects of the Sabbath, including its prohibitions against work and travel and its sacrifices, but also all commands contained in the Old Law. To keep the Old Law in one point makes one responsible to keep all of it. (Galatians 5:3) To try to be justified by the Old Law today causes one to fall from grace. (Galatians 5:4)

## Sabbath Observance Ceased

God intended the observance of the Sabbath to cease. As Jesus fulfilled the Old Law (Matthew 5:17), it was taken out of way and nailed to the cross. (Galatians 5:1-4; Colossians 2:14) It was taken out of the way so that Jesus could establish His new law, the "perfect law of liberty." (James 1:25) Since Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18), everyone must obey His