

STUDY SIX

The Shift from Sabbath to Sunday



1. Read Exodus 31:13-16. How does it stress the seriousness of the Sabbath?

Read the first four paragraphs of chapter five of *The Linchpin*.

2. Read Mark 3:1-6.
 - A. What was the controversy Jesus was facing?
 - B. What from these events tells you about the importance of the Sabbath to the spiritual teachers of the day?

The Sacred Sabbath

An entire Tractate in the Jewish Talmud is dedicated to describing the proper observance of the Sabbath. That tractate has thirty-nine sections and is the longest tractate in the Talmud, demonstrating its importance. It prohibits things such as erasing writing, igniting a fire (so today you cannot flip a light switch on the possibility that it might cause a spark), or “trapping” an animal by closing a door or a gate. Even today, how the Sabbath is observed is the benchmark that divides Orthodox Judaism from Conservative or non-orthodox Jews.

3. Read the following passages and note what it says about the *timing* of Jesus’ resurrection.
 - A. Matthew 28:1
 - B. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
 - C. Luke 18:31-33

Many in the ancient world and across the Middle East count “inclusively.” That means you include the day you are in when you count. The result is that, being executed on a Friday (day 1), and rising on a Sunday, Jesus rose on the *third* day. This might not seem all that significant, until you see the recurring motif of “third day resurrection” throughout the Old Testament.

4. Note the events in the following passage, when they happened, and how they are described.
 - A. Genesis 22:1-5 & Hebrews 11:17-19

 - B. Exodus 19:10-11

 - C. Esther 4:15-16

5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:4 again. Note that it says that he rose on the third day “according to the Scripture,” referring to the Old Testament. Yet, there is no *specific* Old Testament passage that says the Messiah would rise *on the third day*. Instead, as we see in the answers to question 4, there is a motif of resurrection on the third day. Read Hosea 6:1-2. What does Hosea say will happen to Israel who was about to be severely chastised by the Lord?

6. The Festival of the Passover and the Festival of the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament are closely tied together. Passover was celebrated on a Thursday and the Feast of Weeks began the following Sunday. Read Leviticus 23:4-16. Verses 4-8 describe the Passover. Verses 9-14 describe the Feast of Firstfruits, which began the counting of seven full weeks to the Feast of Weeks.
 - A. A small bundle of grain was to be waved before the Lord on the day of Firstfruits. According to verse 11, what day of the week was that?

In this study several reasons have been explored for why Christians -- even early Jewish believers in Jesus -- moved from a strict observance of the Sabbath to gathering on Sundays. Review your answers to the questions in order to summarize those reasons in the chart below.

| Question | Reason to shift to gathering on Sundays |
|----------|---|
| 3 | |
| 4-5 | |
| 6 | |
| 8 | |

Discussion:

- Which of the above reasons is your favorite for believers gathering on Sunday? Why?
- How might you give more purposeful meaning to using *Sunday* itself as a spiritual tool?

Prayer suggestions:

- Ask for help to encourage another believer to use Sunday as a spiritual tool.
- For faith that finds true rest in Christ.