

Plain Questions On The Sabbath

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Reader! be pleased to give a plain answer to each of these plain questions, without equivocation or mental reservation.

1. Did God, after he had finished the work of creation, " bless and sanctify" THE seventh day of the week; or simply the seventh part of time, without reference to any particular day of the seven?
2. Did He not sanctify THE very day in which he rested from his work? Was not that the last day of the seven? Did He sanctify any other?
3. WHY did He " bless and sanctify" the seventh day? Was it not because he rested on that day? Will this reason apply to any other day of the seven? Did he not work on EVERY other day? (See Gen. 2: 2, 3.)
4. Is not God's example of resting on the seventh day enjoined upon us for imitation? (Ex. 20: 8-11.) Do we imitate him, when we rest upon some other day than the one in which He rested?
5. Is it the special appointment of God which render, a day holy, or is it our own act? Is the day holy because we count it so, or because God has made it so?
6. When God enjoins us to count the Sabbath, "the holy of the Lord," (Isa. 58: 13,) is it not equivalent to telling us that He himself has previously constituted it a holy day by blessing and sanctifying it? Is it anything more than requiring us to reckon the day to possess that dignity which He has already conferred upon it?
7. If God's blessing does not rest upon one particularly specified day, to the exclusion of all others, and we are nevertheless required to keep a day holy, are we not re. required to do what is impossible? For how can we count a day to be holy, which God has not previously made so? (Compare Quest. 5.)
8. If God's blessing did not rest upon one particularly specified day, could he challenge to himself any propriety in one day more than in another? Yet in the Sabbath day he claims a special propriety; "MY holy day." (Isa. 58: 13.)
9. Are we not commanded to refrain from labor in that very day which God once " blessed and sanctified," and thereby made holy time? " In IT thou shalt not do any work," etc. Do we obey this command when we work all of that day, and make it the busiest day of all the seven?
10. If it be downright disobedience to set about our work on the seventh day, when God says, " in it thou shalt NOT do any work," can we think to make amends for this act of disobedience by ceasing from work on another day? Even the performance of a required duty will not make amends for another one neglected. How much less, then, the performance of something which is not required! " Who hath required this at your hand?"
11. Has God ever taken away the blessing which he once put upon the seventh day, and made that day a common or secular day?
12. Does not the reason of the blessing (See Quest. 3) possess all the cogency now that it ever did? Has it lost force by the lapse of time? And while the reason of an institution remains, does not the institution itself remain?
13. Was the reason of the blessing which God originally put upon the seventh day, founded upon any need that men then had of a Redeemer? Was it therefore to receive its accomplishment and fulfillment by the actual coming of the Redeemer! In what possible sense can it be said, that Jesus Christ fulfilled and made an end of this reason?
14. Has God ever said of the first day of the week, In it thou shalt not do any work? Has Christ ever said so? Have the apostles?
15. Is there any scriptural proof that Christ, or his apostles, or the Christian churches in the days of the apostles, refrained from labor on the first day of the week?
16. As there is no transgression where there is no law, (Rom. 4: 15; John 3: 4,) what sin is committed by working on the first day of the week?
17. Does not the Sabbath Institution RESULT from the blessing and sanctifying of a particular day? Is not this the very thing in which it consists? How then is the institution separable from the day thus "blessed and sanctified"? How can it be separated from that upon which its very existence depends?

18. If the very life and soul of the institution consist to the blessing which was once put upon a particular day, is it not idle to talk of the transfer of the institution to another day? If another day has been sanctified and blessed, then it is an entirely new institution, and not a transfer of the old.
19. Does not the law of the Sabbath require the weekly commemoration of that rest which God entered into after he had finished the work of creation? By what principle of law or logic, then, can that law be made to require the commemoration of the work of redemption?
20. If it be necessary that the work of redemption be commemorated weekly by a positive institution, must not the obligation so to commemorate it arise from some law which directly and specifically requires it? But when, instead of this, the attempt is made to derive the obligation from the Sabbath law, is it not a tacit acknowledgment that there is no law requiring the weekly commemoration of the work of redemption?
21. Does the Scripture ever apply the name, Sabbath, to the first day of the week? Even in the New Testament, where the term is used, is not the reference always of the seventh day?
22. If Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles fully thirty years after the death of Christ, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, still calls the seventh day of the week the Sabbath, can it be wrong in us to do so? (See Acts 13:14, 4.2, 44; 16: 1, 3; 17: 1, 2; 18: 4.) If this be the inspired application of the term so many years after all the ceremonial institutions were nailed to the cross, is it not our duty to make the same use of the term now?
23. Is it not a manifest perversion of the scriptural use of terms, to take away the sacred name from the seventh day of the week, and give it to the first day?
24. When the first day of the week is so generally called the Sabbath, are not the common people thereby led to suppose that the Bible calls it so? Are they not thus grossly deceived?
25. If the name Sabbath were no longer applied to this day, and it should simply be called first day of the week, as in the Bible, is it not probable that it would soon lose its sacredness in the eyes of the people?
26. Is it possible, then, that God has not given the day a name sufficiently sacred to secure for it a religious regard, nor even guarded it with a law sufficient to prevent its desecration?
27. What then? HAS GOD LEFT HIS WORK FOR MAN TO MEND! IS IT NOT SAFE TO LEAVE THE DAY AS GOD HAS LEFT IT! "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" (Isa. 11: 13.)
28. Are you very sure that by the Lord's Day, (Rev. 1: 10) is meant the first day of the week? Have you any Scripture proof of it? Have you any other proof of it than the testimony of those who are called the early Fathers?
29. If the testimony of the early Fathers is to be relied on, that the Lord's Day means the first day of the week, ought not their testimony to be just as much relied on, as to the manner in which the primitive Christians observed the day?
30. If it were even certain that by the Lord's Day the writer of the book of Revelations meant to designate the first day of the week, would it thence follow that it is a day sacred by divine appointment, any more than that the "Sabbath day's journey," (Acts 1: 12,) was a distance limited and prescribed by divine authority? If Luke could select the latter expression from the vocabulary of human tradition, without intending to sanction it as being of divine origin, could not John do the same with regard to the former expression?
31. Do the Fathers, or any one of them, inform us that the Lord's day was observed by abstinence from labor?—that it was observed as the Sabbath? Mark the question. It is not, was the day observed, simply; but was it observed as the Sabbath?
32. Is there not an important distinction between the Sabbath and a religious festival? Does not the word Sabbath mean rest? Can any day, therefore, be called a Sabbath day, which is not a day of rest from ordinary labor?
33. Does a religious festival require anything more than the commemoration of some important event, allowing the time not occupied in the public celebration of it to be spent in labor or amusement? Is not this precisely the manner in which the first day of the week was observed, according to the testimony of the ancient Fathers?
34. Though the observance of the first day of the week as a religious festival be in itself innocent, (Rom. 14: 5,) so long as it is not made a pretext for dispensing with an express law of God, (Matt. 15: 6,) yet do you find it anywhere in the word of God commanded as a duty?
35. Do you believe that a Sabbath, in the true and proper sense of the term; namely, a day of rest from all ordinary labor, is necessary and indispensable to the wellbeing of mankind? If so, do you honestly suppose that God would set it aside, and have its place supplied by nothing more than a religious festival?

36. Is it not wicked to uphold a course which makes the commandment of God of none effect? (Matt. 15: 1-9; Mark 7: 1-13.)

Reader! carefully ponder the foregoing questions, together with the Scripture references. Answer them as you would if you stood at the gates of death. Do not trifle with the Holy Spirit of God, by forcibly wresting his word from its obvious meaning. Let conscience be unfettered; and act, as fully realizing that "THOU, GOD, SEES ME."

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