

AS BELIEVERS ARE WE TO OBSERVE THE JEWISH SABBATH?

Since the Sabbath was so intertwined with the ceremonial law given to Israel (sabbatic years, year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25), it has no formal relationship to the believer today. The “sabbatic principle” of one day in seven still is in effect, but there is evidence that the early church saw this as being changed to the first day of the week. Evidence for this is seen in the following facts:

1. Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Jn. 20:1), sanctifying it as a special day in the order of the “new creation”.
2. The promised coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1 ff.). (See Hoekema’s **Four Major Cults**, page 165.)
3. At Troas the believers assembled for worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:6, 7).
4. Paul instructed the Christians at Corinth to make contributions on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2).
5. The Apostle John in Revelation 1:10 said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day”(en **tee kuriakee heemera**). The Greek word **kuriakee** is an adjective meaning “the day belonging to the Lord”. All the standard Greek lexicons (Moulton and Milligan, Kittel, Arndt and Gingrich, etc.) understand the word as referring to Sunday. The expression is used to stand for Sunday in such early Christian writings as the **Didache** and Ignatius’ **Letter to the Magnesians**.
6. The testimony of second-century writers uniformly attests to an unquestioned practice since apostolic days of Sunday worship:

“But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.”
(Justin Martyr, **First Apology**, ch. 67; see also his **Dialogue with Trypho**, ch. 26 and **Epistle of Barnabas**, sect. 15).
7. Finally, the Apostle Paul warns believers about those who would condemn them if they did not observe the dietary laws, the feasts, or the Sabbath day (Col. 2:16). Those who observe these and impose them on others are serving the “shadow of things to come”, where now we have the substance of those shadows - Christ (v.17).