

Northbridge Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #41 – The Church: The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day

Note: Most information based on pages 288-296 of the book “Major Bible Themes” by Lewis Sperry Chaffer.

The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day

Beginning with His own work in creation, God has chosen to sanctify, or set apart, one-seventh of all time.

1. To Israel He prescribed the seventh day as a day of “rest”; the seventh, or sabbatic year in which the “land” was to rest; and the fiftieth year as a year of jubilee in recognition of seven times seven years.

Exodus 23:10-11 *“For SIX YEARS you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, BUT DURING THE SEVENTH YEAR LET THE LAND LIE UNPLOWED AND UNUSED. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. Six days do your work, BUT ON THE SEVENTH DAY DO NOT WORK, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed.”*

Leviticus 25:2-7 *“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself MUST OBSERVE A SABBATH TO THE LORD. For SIX YEARS sow your fields, and for SIX YEARS prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in THE SEVENTH YEAR the land is to have a SABBATH of rest, a SABBATH to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. THE LAND IS TO HAVE A YEAR OF REST. Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your manservant and maidservant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.”*

Leviticus 25:8-12 *“Count off seven sabbaths of years—SEVEN TIMES SEVEN YEARS—so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. CONSECRATE THE FIFTIETH YEAR and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. THE FIFTIETH YEAR SHALL BE A JUBILEE FOR YOU; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.”*

- a. In various details both the sabbatic year and the year of jubilee were typically prophetic of the kingdom age, which is the seventh and last of the dispensations and which is characterized by the enjoyment of a sabbatic rest for all creation.
- b. Though in the present age the day to be celebrated is divinely changed from the seventh to the first day of the week because of the new creation’s beginning, the same proportion in the division of time—one day in seven—is perpetuated.

2. The word “sabbath” means cessation, or perfect rest, from activity.
 - a. Apart from the continual burnt offerings and feasts, the day was in no sense one of worship or service.
 - b. In view of the widespread confusion which exists regarding the Sabbath, and especially in view of the effort which is made to recognize it as in force in this present age, it is imperative that the precise teachings of Scripture concerning the Sabbath be carefully weighed.
3. A degree of clarity is gained when the Sabbath is considered in its relation to various periods of time:
 - a. In the period from Adam to Moses it is recorded that God rested at the close of His six creative days.

Genesis 2:2-3 *“By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so ON THE SEVENTH DAY HE RESTED from all His work. AND GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.”*

Exodus 20:10-11 *“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. THEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY.”*

Hebrews 4:4 *“For somewhere he has spoken about THE SEVENTH DAY in these words: ‘AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD RESTED FROM ALL HIS WORK.’”*

- b. But there is no intimation in the Word of God that man was appointed to observe, or ever did observe, a Sabbath until Israel came out of Egypt.
 - 1) The Book of Job discloses the religious life and experience of the patriarchs, and though their various responsibilities to God are there discussed, there is no reference to a Sabbath-day obligation.
 - 2) On the other hand, it is distinctly stated that the giving of the Sabbath to Israel by the hand of Moses was the beginning of Sabbath observance among men.

Exodus 16:29-30 *“Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out. SO THE PEOPLE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY.”*

Nehemiah 9:14 *“YOU MADE KNOWN TO THEM YOUR HOLY SABBATH and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses.”*

Ezekiel 20:12 *“Also I GAVE THEM MY SABBATHS as a sign between us, SO THEY WOULD KNOW that I the Lord made them holy.”*

3) Likewise, it is evident from the records of the first imposition of the Sabbath that on the particular day which was one week, or seven days, previous to the first recorded Sabbath, the children of Israel took a Sabbath-breaking journey of many miles from Elim to the wilderness of Sin (see Exodus 16:1-35).

a) There they murmured against Jehovah, and on that day the supply of food from heaven began which was to be gathered for six days, but was not to be gathered on the seventh day.

b) It is evident, therefore, that the day of their journey which would have been a Sabbath was not observed as a Sabbath.

c. In the period from Moses to Christ, the Sabbath was rightfully in force.

1) It was embedded in the law (see Exodus 20:10-11 above), and the divine cure for its nonobservance was likewise provided in the law of the offerings.

2) In this connection, it is important to observe that the Sabbath was NEVER imposed on the "Gentiles", but was peculiarly a sign between Jehovah and Israel.

Exodus 31:12-17 *"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. THIS WILL BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy. Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. THE ISRAELITES ARE TO OBSERVE THE SABBATH, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. IT WILL BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THE ISRAELITES FOREVER, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.'"*

3) Among Israel's sins, her failure to keep the Sabbath and to give the land its rest are especially emphasized.

d. In the midst of this period of the law, Hosea predicted that, as a part of "the judgments" which were to come upon Israel, her Sabbaths would "cease". This prophecy must at some time be fulfilled, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Hosea 2:11 *"I WILL STOP ALL HER CELEBRATIONS: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, HER SABBATH DAYS—all her appointed feasts."*

e. As the preceding age continued to the death of Christ, His earth-life and ministry were under the law.

1) For this reason He is seen as keeping the law, expounding the law, and applying the law.

2) Finding the Sabbath law obscured by the traditions and teachings of men, He pointed out that the Sabbath was given as a benefit to man, and man was not to be made a sacrifice for the Sabbath.

Mark 2:27 *"Then He said to them, THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, not man for the Sabbath."*

- 3) Christ was faithful to the whole Mosaic system, which included the Sabbath, because that system was in force during His earth-life; but that obvious fact is “no basis” for the claim that a Christian who is under grace and living in another dispensation is appointed to follow Christ in His Sabbath observance.

Matthew 5:17 ““Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them BUT TO FULFILL THEM.”

The Sabbath in the Present Church Age

1. Following the resurrection of Christ, there is no record in the New Testament that the Sabbath was observed by any believer, even in error.
 - a. Doubtless the multitude of Judaized Christians did observe the Sabbath; but no record of such observance was permitted to appear in the Word of God.
 - b. In like manner, following the resurrection of Christ, there is no injunction given to Jew, Gentile, or Christian to observe the Sabbath, nor is Sabbath-breaking once mentioned among the numerous lists of possible sins.
 - c. On the contrary, there are warnings “against” Sabbath observance on the part of those who are the children of God under grace.

Galatians 4:9-10 “*But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are TURNING BACK TO THOSE WEAK AND MISERABLE PRACTICES? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing SPECIAL DAYS and months and seasons and years!”*

- 1) Thus, the New Testament “condemns” the “religious” observance of days, and months, and times, and years.
- 2) These were usually observed with a view to meriting the favor of God and by those who would be thoughtful of God at one time and careless at another.
- 3) Hebrews 4:1-13 contemplates the Sabbath as a type of the rest (from his own works) into which the “believer” enters when he is “saved”.

Hebrews 4:1-3a “*Therefore, since THE PROMISE OF ENTERING HIS REST STILL STANDS, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For WE ALSO HAVE HAD THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO US, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard DID NOT COMBINE IT WITH FAITH. NOW WE WHO HAVE BELIEVED HAVE ENTERED THAT REST...”*

- d. Paul, who practiced and knew the law thoroughly as a “Pharisee of Pharisees”, plainly instructs the child of God *not* to be judged with respect to a Sabbath day, and infers that such an attitude toward the Sabbath is reasonable in view of all that Christ has become to one who is now of the new creation.

Colossians 2:16-17 “Therefore DO NOT LET ANYONE JUDGE YOU by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or A SABBATH DAY. These are A SHADOW of the things that were to come; the reality, however, IS FOUND IN CHRIST.”

NOTE: In this passage (Colossians 2:9-17), it is obvious that reference is made to the “weekly” Sabbaths, rather than to those special or extra Sabbaths which were a part of the ceremonial law.

- e. Romans 14:5 declares that when the believer is “persuaded in his own mind” he may esteem all days alike. This does not imply a neglect of faithful worship, but rather suggests that, to such a one, *all* days are full of devotion to God.

Romans 14:5 “One man considers ONE DAY MORE SACRED THAN ANOTHER; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced IN HIS OWN MIND.”

2. Because of the fact that in the New Testament the Sabbath is never included as any part of the Christian’s life and service, the term “Christian Sabbath” is a misnomer.
3. In this connection it may be noted that in place of the Sabbath of the law there is now provided the “Lord’s Day” of the new creation which far exceeds the Sabbath in its glory, its privileges, and its blessings.

The Sabbath in the Coming Age

1. In full harmony with the New Testament doctrine that the new Lord’s Day is related only to the church, it is prophesied that the Sabbath will be reinstated—thus superseding the Lord’s Day—immediately upon the completion of the out-calling of the church and her removal from the world.
2. Even in the brief period of the Tribulation which must intervene between the end of this age and the age of the kingdom, the Sabbath is again in view; but prophecy especially anticipates the Sabbath as a vital feature of the coming kingdom age.

Matthew 24:20 “Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or ON THE SABBATH.”

Isaiah 66:23 “‘From one New Moon to another and FROM ONE SABBATH TO ANOTHER, all mankind will come and bow down before me,’ says the Lord.”

Ezekiel 46:1 “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but ON THE SABBATH DAY and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened.’”

The Resurrection of Christ and the First Day of the Week

1. The first day of the week has been celebrated by the church from the resurrection of Christ to the present time.

NOTE: This fact is proven by the New Testament records, the writings of the early fathers, and the history of the church.

2. There have been those in nearly every century who, NOT comprehending the present purpose of God in the new creation, have earnestly contended for the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.
3. At present, those who specialize in urging the observance of the seventh day combine these appeals with other unscriptural doctrines.
4. Since the believer is appointed of God to observe the first day of the week under the new relationship of grace, confusion arises when that day is invested with the character of, and is governed by, the seventh-day Sabbath laws. All such teachings ignore the New Testament doctrine of the new creation.

The New Creation

1. The New Testament reveals that the purpose of God in the present unforeseen dispensation is the out-calling of the church, and this redeemed company is the “new creation”, a heavenly people.

Acts 15:13-18 *“When they finished, James spoke up: ‘Brothers, listen to me. Simon has described to us how God at first showed His concern BY TAKING FROM THE GENTILES A PEOPLE FOR HIMSELF. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that THE REMNANT OF MEN (i.e. ‘remnant of Jews’) may seek the Lord, and ALL THE GENTILES WHO BEAR MY NAME, says the Lord, who does these things’ that have been known for ages.’”*

Ephesians 2:11-16 *“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, WHO HAS MADE THE TWO ONE and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. HIS PURPOSE WAS TO CREATE IN HIMSELF ONE NEW MAN OUT OF THE TWO, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility.”*

Ephesians 3:4-6 *“In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the MYSTERY OF CHRIST, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. THIS MYSTERY IS that through the gospel THE GENTILES ARE HEIRS TOGETHER WITH ISRAEL, members together of one body, and SHARERS TOGETHER IN THE PROMISES in Christ Jesus.”*

- a. While it is indicated that marvelous glories and perfections are to be accomplished for this company as a whole (Eph. 5:25-27), it is also revealed that they (i.e. both “Gentiles” and “Jews”) *individually* are the objects of the greatest divine undertakings and transformations.

Ephesians 5:25-27 “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, WITHOUT STAIN OR WRINKLE OR ANY OTHER BLEMISH, BUT HOLY AND BLAMELESS.*”

- b. Likewise, as the corporate body is organically related to Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), so the individual believer is vitally joined to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:12 “*THE BODY IS A UNIT, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. SO IT IS WITH CHRIST.*”

1 Corinthians 6:17 “*But he who unites himself with the Lord IS ONE WITH HIM IN SPIRIT.*”

Romans 6:4-5 “*We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live A NEW LIFE. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be UNITED WITH HIM IN HIS RESURRECTION.*”

1 Corinthians 12:13 “*For WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED BY ONE SPIRIT INTO ONE BODY—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*”

2. Concerning the individual believer, the Bible teaches that:

- a. As to sin, each one in this company has been cleansed, forgiven, and justified;
- b. As to his possessions, each one has been given the indwelling Spirit, the gift of God which is eternal life, has become a legal heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ;
- c. As to his position, each one has been *made* the righteousness of God by which he is accepted in the Beloved forever (2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:6), a member of Christ’s mystical body, a part of His glorious bride, and a living partaker in the new creation of which Christ is the Federal Head.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that IN HIM WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.*”

Ephesians 1:4 “*For He chose us IN HIM before the creation of the world TO BE HOLY AND BLAMELESS IN HIS SIGHT...*”

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 “*Therefore, if anyone is IN CHRIST, he is A NEW CREATION; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself THROUGH CHRIST and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...*”

Galatians 6:15 “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; WHAT COUNTS IS A NEW CREATION.”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS TO DO GOOD WORKS, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 4:24 “...put on the new self, CREATED TO BE LIKE GOD IN TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS.”

- d. Peter, writing of this company of believers, states, “but ye are a chosen generation” (1 Peter 2:9), which means a distinct heaven-born race, or nationality—a stock, or kind—which has been directly created by the power of God.
- e. As the first Adam begat a race which partook of his own human life and imperfections, so Christ, the last Adam, is now begetting by the Spirit a new race which partakes of His eternal life and perfection.

1 Corinthians 15:45 “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made A QUICKENING [life-giving] SPIRIT.”

- 3. Having partaken of the resurrection life of Christ, and being *in Christ*, the believer is said to be already raised with Him.

Romans 6:4 “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, WE TOO MAY LIVE A NEW LIFE.”

Colossians 2:12-13 “...having been buried with Him in baptism and RAISED WITH HIM through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, GOD MADE YOU ALIVE WITH CHRIST. He forgave us all our sins...”

Colossians 3:1-4 “Since, then, YOU HAVE BEEN RAISED WITH CHRIST, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and YOUR LIFE IS NOW HIDDEN WITH CHRIST IN GOD. When Christ, WHO IS YOUR LIFE, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

- a. However, as to his body, the believer is yet to receive a glorious body like the resurrection body of Christ.

Philippians 3:20-21 “But our citizenship IS IN HEAVEN. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, WILL TRANSFORM OUR LOWLY BODIES SO THAT THEY WILL BE LIKE HIS GLORIOUS BODY.”

- b. In confirmation of this we also read that when Christ appeared in heaven immediately following His resurrection, it was as the “firstfruits,” implying that the whole company that are to follow will be like Him, even to their glorified bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 *“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, THE FIRSTFRUITS of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, SO IN CHRIST ALL WILL BE MADE ALIVE. But each in his own turn: Christ, THE FIRSTFRUITS; then, when He comes, THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIM.”*

1 John 3:2 *“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, for we shall see Him as He is.”*

4. In the Word of God, the new creation—which began with the resurrection of Christ and consists of a born-again, heavenly company who are *in Christ*—is everywhere held in contrast with the old creation, and it is from that old and ruined creation that the believer is said to have been saved and delivered.
- a. As the Sabbath was instituted to celebrate the old creation (Exod. 20:10-11; 31:12-17; Heb. 4:4), so the Lord’s Day celebrates the new creation.
- b. Likewise, as the Sabbath was limited in its application to Israel as the earthly people of God, so also the Lord’s Day is limited in its application to the church as the heavenly people of God.

The Lord’s Day

In addition to the fact that the Sabbath is nowhere imposed on the children of God under grace, there are abundant reasons for their observing the first day of the week.

1. *A new day is prophesied and appointed under grace.*
- a. Christ in His crucifixion was the Stone rejected by Israel the “builders”; but through His resurrection He has been made the Headstone of the corner.

Psalm 118:22-24 *“The stone the builders rejected HAS BECOME THE CAPSTONE; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

Acts 4:10-11 *“...know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is ‘the stone you builders rejected, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CAPSTONE.’”*

- b. This marvelous thing is of God, and the day of its accomplishment is divinely appointed as a day of rejoicing and gladness.

Psalm 118:22-24 *“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT.”*

c. Accordingly, Christ's greeting on the resurrection morn was "All hail!" (Matt. 28:9, which is more literally, "O joy!"), and being "the day which the Lord hath made," it is rightfully termed "The Lord's Day."

2. *Observance of the first day is indicated by various events.*

a. On that day Christ arose from the dead.

Matthew 28:1-6 "After the Sabbath, AT DAWN ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; HE HAS RISEN, JUST AS HE SAID. Come and see the place where he lay.'"

b. On that day He first met His disciples in the new fellowship.

John 20:19 "On the evening OF THAT FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!'"

c. On that day He gave them instructions (read: Luke 24:13-45).

d. On that day He ascended into heaven as the "firstfruits," or wave sheaf.

Leviticus 23:10-12 "'Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest A SHEAF OF THE FIRST GRAIN you harvest. He is to WAVE THE SHEAF before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. ON THE DAY YOU WAVE THE SHEAF, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the Lord a lamb a year old WITHOUT DEFECT...'"

John 20:17 "Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, I AM RETURNING TO MY FATHER and your Father, to My God and your God.'"

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, THE FIRSTFRUITS of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, SO IN CHRIST ALL WILL BE MADE ALIVE. But each in his own turn: Christ, THE FIRSTFRUITS; then, when He comes, THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIM."

e. On that day He breathed on them.

John 20:22 "And with that HE BREATHED ON THEM and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

f. On that day the Spirit descended from heaven.

Acts 2:1-4 *“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind CAME FROM HEAVEN and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and CAME TO REST ON EACH OF THEM. All of them were FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*

g. On that day the Apostle Paul preached in Troas.

Acts 20:6-7 *“But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days. ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK we came together to break bread. PAUL SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.”*

h. On that day the believers came together to break bread.

Acts 20:6-7 *“But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days. ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK WE CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD (i.e. “celebrate the Lord’s Supper”). Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.”*

i. On that day they were to “lay by in store” as God had prospered them.

1 Corinthians 16:2 *“ON THE FIRST DAY OF EVERY WEEK, each one of you should SET ASIDE A SUM OF MONEY in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”*

j. On that day Christ appeared to John on Patmos.

Revelation 1:10 *“ON THE LORD’S DAY I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...”*

3. *The eighth day was the day of circumcision.*

a. The rite of circumcision, performed on the eighth day, typified the believer’s separation from the flesh and the old order by the death of Christ.

Colossians 2:11 *“In Him you were also circumcised, IN THE PUTTING OFF OF THE SINFUL NATURE, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ...”*

b. The eighth day, being the first day after a completed week, is symbolical of a new beginning.

4. *The new day is of grace.*

- a. At “the end” of a week of toil, a day of rest was granted to the people who were related to God by works of the law; while to the people under grace, whose works are finished in Christ, a day of worship is appointed which, being the first day of the week, “precedes” all days of work.
- b. In the blessing of the first day the believer lives and serves the following six days.
- c. A day of “rest” belongs to a people who are related to God by “works” which *were* to be accomplished; a day of ceaseless “worship” and “service” belongs to a people who are related to God by “the *finished work* of Christ”.
- d. The seventh day was characterized by “unyielding law”; the first day is characterized by the “latitude and liberty” belonging to grace.
- e. The seventh day was observed with the hope that by “it” one *might be acceptable* to God; The first day is observed with the assurance that one is *already accepted* of God.
- f. The keeping of the seventh day was wrought by the “flesh”; the keeping of the first day is wrought by the “indwelling Spirit”.

5. *The new day has been blessed of God.*

- a. Throughout this age the most Spirit-filled, devout believers to whom the will of God has been clearly revealed have kept the Lord’s day apart from any sense of responsibility to keep the seventh day.
- b. It is reasonable to suppose that if they had been guilty of Sabbath-breaking, they would have been convicted of that sin.

6. *The new day is committed only to the individual believer.*

- a. It is not committed to the unsaved.
 - 1) It is certainly most misleading to the unsaved to give them grounds for supposing that they will be more accepted of God if they observe a day; for apart from the salvation which is in Christ, all men are utterly and equally lost.
 - 2) For social or physical reasons a day of rest may be secured to the benefit of all; but the unregenerate should understand that the observance of such a day adds nothing to their merit before God.
- b. It is not committed to the church as a body.
 - 1) The responsibility to the observance of the first day is of necessity committed to the individual believer only, and not to the church as a whole.

- 2) The manner of its celebration by the individual is suggested in the two sayings of Christ on the morning of His resurrection: “Rejoice!” (i.e. “worship”) and “Go and tell” (i.e. “service”).

Matthew 28:9-10 *“And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘REJOICE!’ So they came and held Him by the feet and WORSHIPED HIM. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. GO AND TELL My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.’”*

- 3) This calls for ceaseless activity in all forms of worship and service; such activity contrasts with the seventh-day rest.

7. *No command is given to keep the first day.*

- a. Since it is all of grace, a written requirement for the keeping of the Lord’s Day is not imposed, nor is the manner of its observance prescribed.
 - 1) By this wise provision, none are encouraged to keep the day as a mere duty; it is to be kept from the heart.
 - 2) Israel stood before God as immature children under tutors and governors and needing the commandments which are given to a child (Gal. 4:1-11); the church stands before God as adult sons.
 - 3) The believer’s life under grace is clearly defined, but it is presented only as the beseechings of God with the expectation that all shall be done *willingly*.

Romans 12:1 *“I BESEECH therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, THAT YOU PRESENT YOUR BODIES a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.”*

Ephesians 4:1-3 *“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, BESEECH YOU to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ENDEAVORING TO KEEP the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

- b. There is little question as to how a well-instructed, Spirit-filled believer (and the Scripture presupposes a normal Christian to be such) will be occupied on the day which commemorates Christ’s resurrection and the new creation.
 - 1) If the child of God is not yielded to God, no “unwilling” observance of a day will correct his “carnal” heart, nor would such observance be pleasing to God.
 - 2) The issue between God and the carnal Christian is not one of “outward” actions, but of a “yielded” life.

8. *The manner of the observance of the Lord's Day may be extended to all days.*

- a. Christ was not more devoted to His Father on one day than on another.
- b. Sabbath rest could not be extended to all days alike; but while the believer may have more time and freedom on the first day of the week, his worship, joy, and service which characterizes the keeping of the Lord's Day should, as far as possible, be his experience every day.

Romans 14:5-6 *"One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man CONSIDERS EVERY DAY ALIKE. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, DOES SO TO THE LORD..."*

Colossians 3:17 *"And WHATEVER YOU DO, whether in word or deed, DO IT ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, giving thanks to God the Father THROUGH HIM."*

Northbridge Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #41 – The Church: The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day

1. Read Pages 1-14 from the Doctrine#41 Study Guide by next Wednesday.

2. Answer the following Questions about “The Church” as you read:

a. The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day

- 1) Beginning with His own work in creation, God has chosen to “sanctify” (or “set apart”) how much of His creation’s “time”? (page 1, top; Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:2-12)

- 2) According to Leviticus 25:2-7, how many years in a row were the Israelites allowed to “sow their fields” and “harvest crops” before they were to allow the land to “rest” for one whole year?

- 3) The Israelites’ “sabbatic year” and the “year of Jubilee” were typically prophetic of what? (page 1, bottom)

- 4) What does the word “Sabbath” mean? (page 2, top)

- 5) True or False. God had the Israelites set aside the “Sabbath Day” as a special day for them to worship Him and attend “synagogue” services. (page 2, top)

- 6) According to Genesis 2:2-3, why did God “bless” the seventh day and make it “holy”?

- 7) True or False. The “Sabbath Day” rest was not observed by man until Israel came out of Egypt. (page 2, middle-bottom)

- 8) When was the “beginning” of Sabbath observance among men?
(page 2, bottom; Exodus 16:29-30; Nehemiah 9:14)
- 9) According to Ezekiel 20:12, why did God give the Israelites “His” Sabbaths?
- 10) True or False. The Sabbath Day of rest was given by God for “all” mankind to observe until Christ returns to the earth to set up His millennial kingdom. (page 3, middle; Exodus 31:12-17)
- 11) What is something that Hosea predicted would “cease” amongst the Israelites as a part of God’s judgment against them for sinning against Him? (page 3, bottom; Hosea 2:11)
- 12) According to Jesus, for whom was the Sabbath Day made for? God or man? (page 3, bottom; Mark 2:27)
- 13) True or False. Because Jesus Christ faithfully observed all of the Sabbath Days of rest during His lifetime, all Christians (both Jews and Gentiles) should do the same as His disciples.
(page 4, top)
- 14) True or False. Following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is no record in the New Testament that the “Sabbath” was ever observed by any “believer” (i.e. “born again Christian”).
- 15) True or False. There is evidence in the New Testament that “religious” observance of special days like the “Sabbath Day” of rest is considered a “weak and miserable practice” and “condemned” now that Jesus Christ has raised from the dead. (page 4, middle-bottom; Galatians 4:9-10)

- 16) According to Hebrews 4:1-13, what is the “Sabbath” a “type” (i.e. “symbol”) of? (page 4, bottom)

- 17) According to Paul, Christians should not be concerned about being “judged” on whether or not we observe the “Sabbath Day” because of what reason? (see Colossians 2:16-17)

- 18) Instead of observing the “Sabbath” as ordered by the Law, what are believers to recognize which far exceeds the Sabbath in its glory, its privileges, and its blessings? (page 5, middle)

b. The Sabbath in the Coming Age

- 1) In full harmony with the New Testament doctrine, the new “Lord’s Day” observance is related to only what group of people in the bible? (page 5, bottom)

- 2) True or False. Now that Christ has come, died, and been resurrected to save both Jews and Gentiles, the “Sabbath Day” has been superseded by the “Lord’s Day” and will never be reinstated by God to be observed again. (page 5, bottom; Isaiah 66:23; Ezekiel 46:1)

c. The Resurrection of Christ and the First Day of the Week

- 1) Which day of the week has been celebrated by the church from the resurrection of Christ to the present time? (page 6, top)

- 2) True or False. From the resurrection of Christ until today, no “true believers” have ever earnestly contended for the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. (page 6, top)

- 3) True or False. Those who currently specialize in urging the observance of the seventh day Sabbath (i.e. such as “Seventh Day Adventists” and Jehovah Witnesses) combine their appeals with other unscriptural doctrines. (page 6, top)

d. The New Creation

- 1) The New Testament reveals that the purpose of God in the “present dispensation” is the outcalling of “the church”. What is another name by which this “redeemed” company of heavenly people called?
(page 6, middle)

- 2) According to Ephesians 3:4-6, what is the “mystery of Christ” which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been “revealed” by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets?

- 3) True or False. As to a believer’s “position”, each one has been made the “righteousness of God” by which he is accepted by God “forever”, a member of Christ’s mystical body, a part of His glorious bride, and a living partaker in the “new creation” of which Christ is the Federal Head. (page 7, bottom; 2Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 1:4)

- 4) According to Galatians 6:15, neither circumcision or uncircumcision means anything. What is the only thing that “counts”?

- 5) What does Peter mean when he refers to believers as “a chosen generation” in 1Peter 2:9? (page 8, top)

- 6) Having partaken of the resurrection life of Christ, and being “in” Christ, the believer is said to be already “what” with Him? (page 8, middle-bottom; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12-13; Colossians 3:1-4)

7) Christ appeared in heaven as the “firstfruits” of the resurrection. What does this “imply”?
(page 9, top; 1Corinthians 15:20-23; 1John 3:2)

8) In the Word of God, when did the “new creation” begin and what does it “consist” of? (pg 9, middle)

9) True or False. Just as the “Sabbath” was limited in its application to Israel as the “earthly” people of God, so also the “Lord’s Day” is limited in its application to the church as the “heavenly” people of God. (page 9, middle)

e. The Lord’s Day

1) According to Psalm 118:22-24, what should the believer do on the Lord’s Day (i.e. “the first day of the week”)? (also see bottom of page 9)

2) List at least “10” things that happened in the New Testament on the “first day of the week”.
(page 10, top – page 11, middle)

3) The rite of “circumcision”, performed on the 8th day (i.e. first day of the week), typified “what” for a believer? (page 11, bottom; Colossians 2:11)

4) The 8th day, being the first day after a completed work, is symbolic of what? (page 11, bottom)

- 5) At the “end” of a week of toil, a day of “rest” was granted to the people who were related to God by works of the “law”. Under “grace”, what type of “day” is granted to the people whose works are finished in Christ (i.e. “believers”)? (page 12, top)

- 6) A day of “rest” belongs to a people who are related to God by “works” which “were” to be accomplished. On the other hand, a day of “worship” and “service” belongs to a people who are related to God by “what”? (page 12, top)

- 7) The seventh was observed with the hope that by observing it, one “might” be acceptable to God. The first day of the week (i.e. “The Lord’s Day”) is observed with the assurance of “what”?
(page 12, middle-top)

- 8) True or False. One evidence that the “Sabbath Rest” is not expected of current Christians is that we do not feel “convicted” of sin for NOT observing it. (page 12, middle)

- 9) True or False. The Lord has “commanded” and “expects” all people on earth today to set aside the first day of the week for Him. (page 12, bottom – page 13, middle)

- 10) According to what Jesus says in Matthew 28:9-10, what is the “manner” of celebrating the Lord’s Day?

- 11) True or False. The way the Israelites typically observed the “Sabbath Day” and the way Christians are to observe the “Lord’s Day” was intended by God to pretty much the same.
(page 13, top)

- 12) True or False. The Lord is “pleased” with a believer consistently attending “church” and worshipping Him, even if the believer is regularly “not in the mood”, but just trying to be obedient and “get it over with”. (page 13, bottom)
- 13) True or False. Any and every day can be celebrated and correctly observed as the Lord’s Day and be a day of worship for a believer. (page 14, top; Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 3:17)
- 14) True or False. Just like the “Lord’s Day”, the Sabbath rest could be extended to any and every day according to Jewish Law. (page 14, top)