

Respect for Bible Terms – No. 4

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One does not really respect the Word of God unless he respects the words of the Word of God, for the words are inspired (1 Cor. 2:13). Lack of respect for scriptural terms and their scriptural meanings has wrought much of the religious division and confusion to be seen in modern Christendom.

The observations noted above certainly apply to scriptural terms and teachings concerning the day on which Christians are to worship God. The third of the Ten Commandments (Exo. 20:8-11) says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” *Sabbath* does not mean “seventh” (as many suppose), but “cessation” or “rest.” The Sabbath required in the Ten Commandments was indeed specified as the seventh day of the week, but this is not what the term means. The Israelites kept it faithfully through the 1500 years of the authority of the Law of Moses (unbelieving Jews still do). Jesus, living under that law as a Jew, kept the Sabbath “as His custom was” (Luke 4:16). However, when Jesus died, the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments was “nailed to the cross” with him and taken out of the way (Col. 2:14). Such things as the Sabbath were but “a shadow of things to come” (Col. 2:16-17). This is why the New Testament is silent concerning any observance of the Sabbath, except when referred to in discussing observance of the Law of Moses.

The first day of the week, the Lord’s day (Sunday in our calendar) is apparently what the Sabbath observance was a shadow or hint of, for it is the day of worship for Christians (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). It is a most appropriate day for Christians to gather and worship God in the name of Christ, for it is the day of Christ’s victory over death (Mat. 28:1). Men have not been content with the Lord’s plan but have tried to graft the Sabbath observance on to the church. This is done by calling the Lord’s day “the Sabbath.” There is no such thing as a sabbath day for Christians or a “Christian Sabbath.” The very meaning of *Sabbath* (cessation) carries an erroneous connotation for Christian worship. The Lord’s day is not a day commemorating a cessation in the work of God, but a great new beginning in the resurrection of His Son. Let us be content with the meaning of Bible terminology.

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