

# The Sabbath and Christians

The 10 Commandments were given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. Also called the “Decalogue” (*deka* meaning “ten” and *logos* meaning “words”), they were a series of moral absolutes where God pronounced, “You shall” and “You shall not.”

The 10 Commandments can be divided into two parts — the first four are vertical dealing with man’s duties to God, while the last six are horizontal dealing with man’s duties to one another. They were preserved on two stone tablets and stored in the Ark of the Covenant, symbolizing the close relationship of God and His Word.



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The fourth Commandment says to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” The word “Sabbath” means to rest or to cease. It was the seventh day of the week (our Saturday). On that day, the children of Israel were not to work. Instead, they were to rest and worship (Leviticus 23:2). The penalty for failing to keep the Sabbath was death (Numbers 15:32-36).

It is important for us to understand that the Sabbath command was part of the old law given specifically to the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 5:15) and was never required of Christians. The emphasis in the New Testament is on the “first day of the week,” not the seventh day (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

The old law, including the Sabbath command, was nailed to the cross and is no longer binding today. That is why Paul said “don’t let anyone condemn you” for not celebrating “Sabbaths” (Colossians 2:16).

Christians are not under the 10 Commandments today (2 Corinthians 3:6-14). The Sabbath was given to the Jews, for the Jews. It was part of their law, which is why Hosea called them “her Sabbaths” (Hosea 2:11), and why Tertullian said that Sabbaths were “strange” to Christians. We are not required to keep the Sabbath today!