

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

- Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?
- A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: Gen. 2:3. Luke 23:56. Acts 20:7. I Cor. 16:1,2
John 20:19-26

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was the seventh day appointed by God as the Sabbath day?
The seventh day was appointed as the sabbath day because it was the day he rested from the works of creation.
2. When did God appoint that day as the sabbath?
He appointed the seventh day as the sabbath right after his works of creation. (See Gen. 2:2).
3. How long was the seventh day to be observed as the sabbath day?
It was to be observed as the sabbath day until Christ rose from the dead. (See Matt. 28:1).
4. What day was to be observed from that time, according to the Word of God?
The first day of the week was to be observed and is to be observed by Christians until the end of the world.
5. How can we be sure that the first day is to be observed as the sabbath?
We can be sure because it was instituted by Jesus Christ and has been observed by Christians ever since that time.
6. Is there any correlation between the sabbath of the Old Testament and the sabbath instituted after the resurrection of Christ?
Yes, there is a correlation in that God rested on the seventh day after his work of creation and Christ rested on the first day after going through the suffering that brought about man's redemption. (Heb. 4:10).
7. Are there other Scriptural proofs of the first day of the week being the new Sabbath?
Yes, there are other proofs such as the Lord putting his name on the first day; Paul speaking of taking the collection on the first day of the week; the disciples being assembled together on the first day of the week. (Rev. 1:10; I Cor. 16:1,2; John 20:19; Acts 20:7).

“REMEMBER”

“Remember the sabbath day...” It is true that so many people today are forgetting this commandment. Times have certainly changed since Emperor Constantine declared the first Sunday blue laws in 321 A.D. He required all courts, towns, and workshops to be at rest on the Lord’s Day. Today the church has a new ritual. It is the Sunday Absentee ritual of the lake, of the open road, of amusements, of army drill. Relatively few seem to be remembering the sabbath and to be concerned with the fourth commandment.

There is still another meaning to the word “Remember”. It is quite significant that this is the only commandment that begins with this word. It is as if God knew this was one man would tend to forget. But in addition to how we should spend the day, the word “remember” should bring to our minds two great works: creation and redemption.

The work of creation should be brought to our minds since the sabbath of the Old Testament started when the Lord God rested the seventh day. Every sabbath day it would be good for us to start the day by meditating on creation. Our Shorter Catechism’s definition puts it so well: “The word of creation is God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good.” How wonderful it is to think on His power and this beautiful world He created.

The work of redemption should be brought to our minds since the Lord Jesus rose from the dead on the first day after going through the suffering. He shed His blood on Calvary’s Tree for you and me. In one way we can say that redemption exceeds creation. Creation was a monument of God’s power; redemption was a monument of God’s love. Think once again: “He was made sin for us.” (2 Cor. 5:21). He died willingly. He loved us. His death, His redemption is everlasting. These things should melt our hearts, should cause tears to come to our eyes, as we think of how very many times we neglect Him and dishonor His Name. The mediation of Christ and His wonderful love manifested in His redeeming us is something for us to think about on the Lord’s Day.

“Remember the sabbath day . . .” This is a good way to start the Lord’s Day. Possibly if more would start the day remembering the works of creation and redemption there would be less breaking of the Sabbath!

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