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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Sabbath in Luke–Acts: The Practice of the Earliest Christians

TEACHING SUMMARY

One of the major questions among believers today is whether the Sabbath commandment still applies to followers of the Messiah. Some believe that the coming of Christ ended the commandment to keep the Sabbath, while others believe the earliest followers of Yeshua continued to observe it.

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts provide insight into how Yeshua and his earliest followers treated the Sabbath. Luke repeatedly records that Yeshua attended synagogue on the Sabbath as a regular practice. Scripture describes this as his custom, indicating that Sabbath observance was a normal and consistent part of his life.

Although Yeshua was accused of breaking the Sabbath, the accounts show that these accusations were based on interpretations of religious leaders rather than violations of the Torah itself. Activities such as healing or plucking grain were not actually prohibited in the Law of Moses.

When challenged, Yeshua defended his actions as lawful rather than claiming that the Sabbath was no longer relevant. This demonstrates that he upheld the authority of the Torah.

After Yeshua's death and resurrection, his followers continued to observe the Sabbath. Luke records that the women rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment, even delaying their preparations for Yeshua's burial.

The book of Acts also shows the apostles continuing to gather and teach on the Sabbath. Paul frequently attended synagogue services on the Sabbath during his missionary journeys.

Gentile believers are also shown participating in synagogue gatherings where the Law of Moses was read every Sabbath. This indicates that Sabbath observance continued to be part of the life of the early believing community.

Some point to a gathering on the first day of the week mentioned in Acts as evidence that Sunday replaced the Sabbath. However, the text does not indicate that this meeting replaced Sabbath observance. At most, it may describe an additional gathering.

Overall, Luke consistently portrays the earliest followers of Yeshua as continuing to observe the Sabbath.

SUMMARY POINTS

- God commanded the Sabbath in the Torah.
 - Yeshua regularly attended synagogue on the Sabbath.
 - Sabbath observance was described as his custom.
 - Yeshua was accused of breaking the Sabbath but defended his actions as lawful.
 - Healing and plucking grain did not violate the Torah.
 - Yeshua's followers continued to rest on the Sabbath after his death.
 - The apostles frequently gathered and taught on the Sabbath.
 - Gentile believers also participated in Sabbath gatherings.
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FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. The Sabbath commandment is found in the _____.
2. Yeshua attended the synagogue on the Sabbath as was his _____.
3. Religious leaders accused Yeshua of _____ the Sabbath.
4. Yeshua defended his actions as _____.
5. The women rested on the Sabbath according to the _____.
6. Paul regularly attended the _____ on the Sabbath.
7. The Law of Moses was read every _____ in the synagogues.
8. Gentile believers often gathered with Jewish believers on the _____.

Challenging

1. Luke records that nothing from the _____ will become void.
 2. The disciples were criticized for plucking _____ from a field.
 3. Healing on the Sabbath was criticized by some religious leaders but was not prohibited in the _____.
 4. Early believers were known as the sect of the _____.
 5. The Jerusalem Council addressed whether Gentiles must be _____ to be saved.
 6. James expected Gentile believers to hear the Law of Moses read every _____.
 7. Some believers gathered on the _____ day of the week in Acts.
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GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the Sabbath was an important practice for Yeshua?
2. Why were Yeshua's Sabbath healings controversial to the religious leaders?
3. What does this teaching show about the difference between God's law and human traditions?
4. Why would the apostles continue gathering on the Sabbath after Yeshua's resurrection?
5. What role did the synagogue play in the early believing community?
6. How can believers today learn from the practices of the earliest followers of Yeshua?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Torah
2. Custom
3. Breaking (violating)
4. Lawful
5. Commandment
6. Synagogue
7. Sabbath
8. Sabbath

Challenging

1. Law
2. Grain
3. Torah
4. Nazarenes
5. Circumcised
6. Sabbath
7. First