

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, CHRISTIANS AND THE SABBATH.

Many Christians are confused about what they should keep, and what not to keep. The people who demand the keeping of the Sabbath base their understanding not on the Bible, but on visions given to some (about keeping the Sabbath), supporting their own vision which could be from where God's knows; by quoting some biblical verses to make their point of view look good.

Many Christians who understand the true gospel of Christ have confidence in worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ on Sunday, but yet they dare not say that the Law of God has changed, and therefore this fear keeps them from going deep into understanding this subject.

Therefore let us look together to God's only authoritative words "the Bible".

1. The background of God's Law, or the Law of Moses; this includes the Ten Commandments.

- a. We have to understand that the world did not have a Law to help them act like human beings in the way God intended them to. People were killing each other, stealing from one another and doing everything against what God wanted them to be. It was a moral standard that they needed to know in order to act like human beings.

The Law was a mirror to show them their sins.

- b. The Law of God was the shadow of the things to come, the shadow of salvation. Therefore when they did something wrong there was some hope in receiving forgiveness (through sacrifices). The law of God is the prophetic words about Christ, fulfilled and ended with Christ. God fulfilled His promise of Salvation by giving His people the Law which is the shadow of the real thing – Christ (Col 2:16-17).

2. The Law of Moses ended with Christ starting a new covenant.

God did not change but rather moved on from the shadow of knowing God to the real thing, Christ. The change was not in God, but in the way which we have to know God, in our relationship with him.

2 Corinthians 3:3 “They can see that you are a letter from Christ, written by us, it is not a letter written with pen and ink, but by the Spirit of the living God; not one carved on stone (Ten commandment), but in human hearts.

Verses 7-8: “Yet that old system of law that led to death began with such glory that people could not bear to look at Moses’ face. For as he gave them God’s law to obey, his face shone out with the very glory of God-though the brightness was already fading away. Shall we not expect far greater glory in these days when the Holy Spirit is giving life?

Verse 9: “if the plan that leads to doom was glorious, much more glorious is the plan that makes men right with God.”

The Law of God which condemns man is glorious, how much more glorious is Christ that brings righteousness.

3. Shall we live, and do what we like? NO

2 Corinthians 3:10 “In fact, that first glory as it shone from Moses’ face is worth nothing at all in comparison with overwhelming glory of the new agreement.

In the old system we heard of God, we learned of the law that leads to death, but now God is with us, God lives in us.

We are a new creation, the old is dead. “I” no longer lives, but Christ lives in me.

The old system will lead us to death, but the new covenant will lead us to victory, why? Not by power but by my spirit says the Lord. It is not the power of man but the Spirit of the new covenant in Christ Jesus that can and will lead us to victory.

The new covenant is Christ God himself living in us. Therefore the glory of the new covenant must be greater than the old law.

Matthew 5:21: “you have heard that it was said to those of old (the law) you shall not murder and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that (new covenant) whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever say to his brother, Raca Shall be in danger of the council. But whoever say’s you fool shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 5:27-28: “you have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you that (new covenant) whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

This means that the new covenant Christ has to become the basis of our relationship with God. We must identify with Christ and His law, not in the law of Moses. Christ has to become the centre of our lives. To obey him is to live Christ.

Christ's new covenant is a covenant of grace, love, forgiveness, kindness, suffering, mercy and all of what Christ is.

4. What about the Sabbath keeping?

There is no difference, as we have seen from the above statement all the laws of Moses have been fulfilled and ended with Christ. The keeping of the Sabbath is no different; Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath. From the Law of keeping the Sabbath which is the Shadow of the real thing- Christ, to the new covenant Christ. From keeping just one day, to giving all our lives to God, every day becomes the day of the Lord. If I live or die, I live for Christ, and die for Christ; this is the new Covenant of Christ.

But let us go the 10 miles with those who have questions about this, and deal with it now.

a. Keeping the Sabbath was for Israel only.

God commanded Israel to observe the Sabbath so that they would remember that while in Egypt they had no rest, but that He had delivered them from their bondage and given them a day of rest (Deut 5:15) and (Deut 6:20-22) It was to be a sign between them and God so that they would never forget that it was He who had delivered them from the Egyptians. (Ex 31:13-17). It would have made no sense for the Gentiles to keep it because it would have had no meaning to them. They were never delivered from Egyptian bondage. We must realize that all the Bible is God's Word and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Having said that we must realize that the Bible consists of two covenants, the Old and the New. The Old Covenant (Old Testament) includes, of course, the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible).

(The New Covenant (New Testament) is "a better covenant" Hebrews 8:6-10). The New Covenant is better for at least two reasons: The Old Covenant applied *only to the Jews* and no one could keep it because they did not have the power to do so, and if any of the Jews broke the Law at just one point they were guilty of breaking the whole Law (James 2:10 NIV). The New Covenant includes not only Jews if they repent of their sins and receive Jesus Christ (are born again), but Gentiles also.

b. The Jews were to strictly observe it;

1. Not to work on it. (Ex 34:21, 20:8-11, 23:9-12, 34:21)
2. No fire was to be kindled. (Ex 35:1-3)
3. No gathering of sticks for a fire (Num 16:32-35)
4. No buying or selling (Nehemiah 13:15-21)
5. Sacrifice two lambs of first year without spot and blemish and two-tenths of an ephah of flour mingled with oil (Num 28:9-10).

5. Keeping any portion of the Sabbath and leaving other portion is not acceptable.

The people who claim that we have to keep the Sabbath today got it wrong on two accounts. Firstly, the Sabbath ended with Christ. Secondly the Sabbath was for the Jewish people, and they were to keep all of it. Disobedience to just one part of it means that those who are under it are condemned.

In Galatians 5:3 said “And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.”

6. You cannot be justified by the old law, or by keeping the Sabbath.

Those who think that they obey God by keeping the Sabbath are wrong again. Because keeping the old law will not make you justified, but will take you away from the grace of Christ. Galatians 5: 4 “Christ is useless to you if you are counting on clearing your debt to God by keeping those laws, you are lost from God’s grace.” (The life application Bible).

To trust in Sabbath keeping for justification means that we do not accept the fullness of Christ’s victory. Such beliefs mean that we do not accept Christ’s sacrifice as completely successful, and that we feel that works are necessary to bring about our justification, rather than faith in Christ alone. Galatians 3:11 “Consequently, it is clear that no one can ever win God’s favour by trying to keep the Jewish Laws because God has said that the only way we can be right in his sight is by faith.”(The life application Bible).

7. Did Jesus keep the Sabbath?

The answer was really not in the way the Pharisees observed it. Clearly there was a difference in how Jesus observed the Sabbath and how the Pharisees observed the Sabbath. This shows itself in Jesus’ confrontation with the Pharisees in Mark 2:23-28. In this story, Jesus and His disciples are going through a grain field and picking heads of grain to eat. The Pharisees confront Jesus and complain that what they are doing is not lawful on the Sabbath. Jesus points out to them that

David did the same thing when he was being chased by King Saul. Jesus then says something that puts the Pharisees in their place, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28). Essentially what Jesus was saying is that the Pharisees have grossly misinterpreted the intention of the Sabbath. The Sabbath, the day of rest and worship, was commended for man’s benefit, not the other way around. The Pharisees, with their added tradition, had made the Sabbath a burden for the people to observe. Jesus taught us that He is the Lord of the Sabbath, and what really matters is the principles, not the letter of the law. The letter has changed but the principle remains the same. Jesus becomes our Sabbath or resting place. He said, “come to me all those who are burdened and I will give you rest”; I am your healer, your redeemer and your deliver, I am the Lord of The Sabbath.

8. Did the Early Church keep the Commandments and the Sabbath?

The answer really is no. Acts chapter 15 Read the whole chapter starting at verse 5 “But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying it is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.” The disciples conclude that the non Jewish are not required to be circumcised to keep the Law of Moses (of God).

The early church moved from the shadow to the real thing; from the Sabbath to Christ, meeting with Him daily. Acts 2:46-47 “**So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**” No more Sabbath

In Acts 20:7 said “Now on the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul ready to depart the next day spoke to them and continued his message until midnight”.

I Corinthians 16:2: “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come”.

In the book of Acts they will tell you that the apostles where meeting on the Sabbath day. Acts 13:42, 44, Acts 18:4

All of these scriptures show the apostles beginning to preach the gospel in the Jewish synagogues, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles who had assembled there.

9. What does it mean to us today (keeping the Sabbath).

Spiritual meaning: God had the laws of Moses and the Sabbath as a covenant of the old with his people to remind them that He had delivered them from the bondage of the Egyptians. Christ in His new covenant has delivered us from the bondage of sin at the cross of Calvary, and we are to observe Sunday, the resurrection day as a time of victory from sin; to worship and praise His name and tell the world of Jesus the king of glory.

Hebrews 10:25: *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the habit of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching.” God has called us to worship together and to remember his death and resurrection.*

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We will continue to worship Him our Lord and saviour. To Him be the glory.

Amen.

Let us pray.