

Seeing Only Jesus

14) Christ Our Sabbath Rest

'And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed'"

(Ex.31:12-17)

✓The Sabbath was a sign between God and the children of Israel, not the Gentiles. It was given to distinguish them as God's own people

✓Gen.2:1-3 is not a command to observe the seventh day

✓There is no mention of a Sabbath observance from Adam to Moses

✓It is incredible to think that the Sabbath could have existed as an institution for 2,500 years without a single mention of it. It was given only to Israel as a part of the law. *'You made known to them (Israel) Your holy Sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, by the hand of Moses Your servant' (Neh.9:13-14)*

The law, including the sabbath, was given as a covenant to a specific people

***'And Moses called all Israel, and said to them:
"Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which
I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn
them and be careful to observe them. The LORD
our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The
LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers,
but with us, those who are here today, all of us
who are alive"'***

(Deut.5:1-3)

The law was also given as a covenant for a specific time – from Sinai until the time of Jesus, (approximately 1500 years), until...

'This is the New Covenant in My blood...'

'In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete'
(Heb.8:13)

The law had an expiry date

'What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, **till** the Seed should come to whom the promise was made... Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor'

(Gal.3:19,24-25)

✓The whole Mosaic system has ceased, including the sabbath. If we wanted to be under the Jewish sabbath (and if we could) we would be obligated to the whole law otherwise we would incur its curse (Gal.3:10). Also, we would have to stone to death any person in our midst who does not keep just one feature of the sabbath

✓It is also wrong to observe the Jewish sabbath on the first day. To try to borrow from an obsolete system and incorporate it into Christianity is even worse. The original heresy was to try to mix law with grace

✓In the epistles, Christians are never instructed to observe the sabbath

- ✓ **The First commandment, 'You shall have no other gods before Me' is repeated 50 times**
- ✓ **The Second, 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image...' etc. 12 times**
- ✓ **The Third, 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain...' etc. 4 times**
- ✓ **The Fourth, 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy...' etc. 0 (NOT ONCE!!!)**
- ✓ **The Fifth, 'Honor your father and your mother...' etc. 6 times**
- ✓ **The Sixth, 'You shall not murder' 6 times**
- ✓ **The Seventh, 'You shall not commit adultery' 12 times**
- ✓ **The Eighth, 'You shall not steal' 6 times**
- ✓ **The Ninth, 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor' 4 times**
- ✓ **The Tenth 'You shall not covet...' 9 times**

✓The only time 'sabbath' is mentioned in the NT epistles is when believers are warned against coming under any sense of obligation to keep a sabbath, *'So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ'* (Col.2:16-17)

✓The context of this admonition is that we have been removed from the realm of the law by our death, burial and resurrection with Christ. We have been transferred into the realm of grace. The sabbath was a shadow of the substance, which is Christ. To forsake the substance and return to the shadow is forbidden

✓ **A new day has been appointed under grace, called 'the Lord's Day' (Rev.1:10), not sabbath**

✓ **Jesus was in the tomb for three days and three nights until the sabbath was over, signifying that it, and the law, had passed away. Then He rose on the first day of the week, the firstfruits of the new creation**

✓ **When Christ rose the new creation was brought into existence. There is now nothing in the old order for the believer. We stand on resurrection ground. We belong to the new creation. To relate to the old order in any way is to fall from grace**

✓The only day recorded that Christians assembled together was on the first day of the week, never on the Sabbath, See Acts 20:6-7; 1 Cor.16:2; Rev.1:10. They came together on the Lord's Day and declared themselves to be the Lord's people

✓It is claimed that the keeping of the Jewish sabbath was observed by the Church until Constantine changed the day in AD 321, or that a later Pope did. This is completely untrue. All traditional writings from the first, second and third centuries are that believers came together on the first day. There are no accounts contradictory to this

QUOTES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

In A.D. 70, the Didache of the Apostles stated:

"On the Lord's own Day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks"

In A.D. 110, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch said:

"If then those who walked in the ancient practices attain unto newness of hope, no longer observing Sabbaths but fashioning their lives after the Lord's Day, on which our life also arose through him, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ, our only teacher"

Justin Martyr, in A.D.135, wrote:

"Sunday is the day upon which we all hold our communion assembly, because it is the first day on which God having wrought a change in the darkness and matter made the world. And Jesus Christ our Saviour, on that day, rose from the dead. And on the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits"

And, "On the Lord's Day all Christians in the city or country meet together because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection; and then we read the apostles and prophets. This being done, the president makes an oration to the assembly exhorting them to imitate and to practice the things which they have heard, and then we all join in prayer, and after that we celebrate the Lord's Supper"

Bardesanes, in A.D. 160, wrote:

"Wherever we be, all of us are called by the one name of the Messiah, namely Christian, and upon one day, which is the first day of the week, we assemble ourselves together and on the appointed days we abstain from food"

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, in A.D. 178 wrote:

"The mystery of the Lord's resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day"

Clement of Alexandria, in A.D. 194 wrote:

"The old Sabbath day has become nothing more than a working day"

**Tertullian, of Carthage, in A.D. 200, speaking
of the sun-worshippers said:**

***"Though we share with them Sunday, we are
not apprehensive lest we seem to be
heathen"***

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in A.D. 253 said:

***"The Lord's Day is a day of joy because of
him who rose thereon"***

**Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, in A.D. 300
wrote:**

***"We keep the Lord's Day as a day of joy
because of Him who rose thereon"***

✓ **Just as Judaism has a beginning, so does Christianity. It is not the Cross, but the resurrection**

✓ **When Jesus died He brought an end to the old. It is the end of sin, death, the law, condemnation, etc. When He rose from the dead He ushered in the new creation for those who are 'in Him'**

✓ **The Bible speaks of two creations – the old and the new. The Sabbath of the OT commemorated the rest God provided in the old creation. The Lord's Day commemorates His rest in the New Creation. As God rested from His work, so Christ has rested from His and we cease from ours**

✓ **God no longer rests in a fallen creation but in the finished work of Christ**

✓ **This new creation, of which Christ is the firstfruits, is faultless in God's sight; and both God and His new covenant people enjoy true rest in the new creation**

✓ **God refers to this rest as 'My rest' (Heb.3:11; 4:5). It is 'His rest' (Heb.4:10)**

✓ **It is also the rest which Christ promised us, 'Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light' (Matt.11:28-30)**

✓ *'Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it' (Heb.4:1)*

✓ **To enter God's rest equates to believing the gospel of grace. This is made clear in the two verses which follow, 'For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest' (Heb.4:2-3)**

✓ **To believe in Christ is to rest fully in the sufficiency of His merits for the entire work of our salvation**

✓The word 'rest', as used here, does not mean refreshment from weariness but ceasing to work because the job is done, as when God rested at the completion of His creation works

✓It is only when a work is completed that this kind of rest can be enjoyed

✓When Jesus died, the work of redemption was perfected; nothing more is required of us. God is totally satisfied in the redeeming sacrifice of His Son, and those who believe in Him enter into God's rest and cease from **all striving**, *'For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His' (Heb.4:10)*

Application

1) We are not to judge others regarding their views of the sabbath

'Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it'
(Rom.14:5-6)

2) Neither are we to permit others to judge us regarding our view of the sabbath

'So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ'
(Col.2:16-17)

3) We are to enter into God's rest by ceasing to trust in our efforts and to fully trust in the finished work of Christ

'For we who have believed do enter that rest...For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience'
(Heb.4:3,10-11)

This is what distinguishes us now as the people of God

**4) Entering into God's rest is not ceasing
from *good* works, but from *dead* works**

It's not inactivity, but directed activity

***'For by grace you have been saved through
faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift
of God, not of works, lest anyone should
boast. For we are His workmanship, created
in Christ Jesus for good works, which God
prepared beforehand that we should walk in
them'***

(Eph.2:8-10)