

## Sabbath keeping in the New Covenant

Would you be surprised to learn that during the time the New Testament was being written that the entire Christian Church throughout the known world observed the Seventh day Sabbath? Yet there are Christians who erroneously claim that the Sabbath Commandment does not exist in the New Testament and therefore no longer has to be observed. This logic is fatally flawed as it is not the absence of something been said or a written record that makes a Commandment of God obsolete. Anything important that changed between the Old and New Testament has *always* been clearly stated in the Bible. If it is a Commandment of God, then what we need is an unmistakable and extremely clear directive that the Sabbath was abolished or changed to Sunday.

I have also found that many Christians have the mind-set that everything starts fresh in the New Testament but again, this could not be further from the truth. It was the original Bible translators and not God that divided the Bible into two Testaments and so absolutely everything except for what we are specifically told otherwise continues from the Old into the New as if it was just *one* book undivided. So one does not establish if a Commandment still exists in the New Testament by finding it repeated, but instead, looking for an unmistakable instruction that it has changed. God does not work on assumptions and especially on something as important as His Moral law such as His Sabbath. If a Commandment of God was changed then the Bible would be SCREAMING the change at us.

Some also claim the Sabbath Commandment did not exist until the Ten Commandments were first given in Exodus 20 because there is no written record of the Commandment being given before then. But in Exodus 16 we find God testing Israel (*these were not Jews*) to see if they would keep His Sabbath and on the Seventh day as He commanded. When they failed to do so, God accused them of disobeying *all* His Commandments and laws. But how could they have been breaking the Sabbath and every other Commandment if there is no record of them been given before Exodus 20? There may be no written record in the Bible but there is undeniable proof that they knew them and were keeping them. And what about Cain and Abel? We find God was angry with Cain in Genesis 4:3-7 because he brought an offering from the ground which symbolized righteousness by works, but Abel brought the firstborn lamb as a sin offering which symbolized righteousness by faith. In order to have a sin offering, there must be a law. (1 John 3:4) God also says to Cain in verse 7 that sin is lying at the door.

And Romans 4:15 says there is no transgression where no law exists. So although the Commandments had not yet been codified, they had to exist since creation or Cain could not be guilty of murder. And what about Abraham? If there were no Commandments or laws given in the book of Genesis or before Exodus 20, then what exactly is it that God says Abraham was keeping in Genesis 26:5 when He says he kept His *Commandments, statutes and laws*? So even though there was no written record of any Commandments or laws been given we know they were by the witness

of them been kept. The same situation also exists in the New Testament in reference to the Sabbath regardless of the proofs we are soon going to give.

For those who erroneously believe that anything that is not also found in the New Testament has ended, think again. Here are just two of many such things that are not found in the New Testament. Anyone feel like putting God to the test to see if He will accept these things today?

Leviticus 18:23 - Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it *is* confusion.

Deuteronomy 22:5 - The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

The first Commandment is the "*thou shalt have no other Gods before me*" and there is actually far less evidence of this Commandment still existing in the New Testament than the Sabbath or any other Commandment. The closest New Testament scripture we have is Matthew 4:10 "*You shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*" As you can see, it does not specifically say that you shall have no other God's before me but it is certainly implied. Does the absence of the precise wording to *have no other Gods before me* make it obsolete? Certainly not! It is still clearly implied just as the Sabbath Commandment is clearly implied by its many references of it being kept and the silence of it being abolished. I don't believe anyone would say that it would be acceptable to have other god's before Him, but this Commandment does not propose a threat in the same way the Sabbath Commandment seems to with so many Christians. The Sabbath is the only Commandment that Commands us to actually do something. All the Other Commandments say "*thou shalt not.*" This is one reason the Sabbath Commandment meets with so much opposition. Most Christians do not want a day of uninterrupted rest and worship with their Heavenly Father. As a result, it far too easy for Satan to find people he can use to attack the truth on this one Commandment that is a sign it is God we love and worship. You would think that this would be blessing and desirable for true Christians but apparently not. God said we should find it a delight but it seems that many Christians do not agree with their heavenly Father and would rather call it bondage or legalism. How sad God must feel.

Isaiah 58:13-14 - If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

We know Jesus kept the Sabbath as was His custom and even in His death. Paul also kept the Sabbath as was His custom and we find an abundance of scriptures that show Paul only worshipped in the Synagogue on the Sabbath day and no other day. We will soon see that there is not one single solitary scripture that specifically shows anyone

whatsoever worshipping in the Synagogue on any other day of the week other than the Sabbath. It is also very clear that Luke kept the Sabbath who was a Gentile and that Paul also taught the Gentiles in the Synagogue and this was also only done on the Sabbath.

There are and always will be very clear New Testament scriptures that unmistakably inform us of any changes from the Old Testament. If there are not crystal clear scriptures informing us of any change, then there is no change. The New Testament also shows the Sabbath Commandment in place as expected by the witness of it being kept by both Jew and Gentile after the cross. But because of those who attack the *Sabbath of the Lord thy God*, there are Christians looking for something even more substantial than the example of the entire New Testament Church keeping the Sabbath or Jesus declaring that not one Jot or Tittle was going to pass from the law as long as Heaven and Earth are still here. You would think that this and the absence of one clear scripture that says the Sabbath was abolished *should* be enough but since there are those who seem to find this inadequate, even more solid evidence will be provided.

So for those truth seekers out there that truly love God with all their heart, here are four more proofs that the Sabbath exists after the cross in the New Covenant and is just as eternal as the other nine Commandments just as Jesus promised.

## **New Testament Sabbath Keeping – Proof 1**

As Jesus was nearing the end of His ministry, Jesus said to His disciples that every stone of the Jewish Temple would be “*thrown down.*” Matthew 24:1-2. This occurred when the temple was destroyed by the Romans during “The First Jewish War” in 70 A.D.

Matthew 24 is just one of many prophetic passages that has a dual application and why some get so confused and come up with what is known as the Preterist view, where they say the second coming of Jesus has already occurred which of course is incorrect!

So Jesus parallels this time of trouble and persecution that was to occur forty years *after* the cross, also to the end times and His second coming, and the abomination of desolation that is also an end time warning to know when to flee to the mountains to avoid end time persecution. And hence the words of the disciples that followed those of Jesus when He spoke of every stone of the temple being thrown down being as follows, “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3.

Jesus goes on to speak further about this future event with the destruction of the temple *and* the time of tribulation before His second coming. He explains to His disciples and how this would be a horrible time of death and persecution. Jesus explains, “Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his

house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! Matthew 24:16-19. So Jesus exclaims that when this time comes that one should flee to the mountains or they would perish.

Now here is that first New Testament evidence that the Sabbath would be kept after the cross and that it was not abolished. Note what Jesus states in the very next verse: Matthew 24:20 "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:"

Some of the proponents trying to avoid this evidence insist this conversation between Jesus and His disciples only applied to the Jews. But this is a bad assumption or a desperate attempt at proving a lie as we shall now see. Firstly, Matthew 24 says or implies no such thing. And secondly and supportively, Jesus is also and primarily referring to the end times and His second coming. If the proponent's were correct, then Jesus is ONLY coming back for the Jews and the rest of us are going to be left behind. Does anyone still want to apply these words only to the Jews? I think not! So how should we respond to the words of Jesus if we could speak to Him on this? Perhaps we could say, "*What are you talking about Jesus? What does it matter if it is on a Sabbath day? Don't you know the Sabbath ended at the cross?*" Obviously not! Did Jesus call it the "OLD Sabbath day?" Or the "ABOLISHED Sabbath day?" Or did He call it what it was? "THE Sabbath Day!" Jesus is making it abundantly clear that the Sabbath was still going to be kept forty years after His death and so says to pray that they do not have to flee in the winter or a Sabbath day as a cold winter day would make the journey more difficult and long journeys were also not allowed on the Sabbath. If the Sabbath was no longer in effect after His death and resurrection, then give one intelligent reason why Jesus instructed His Disciples to pray their flight would not be on the Sabbath. There is only one intelligent answer that can be concluded from this. Jesus would never have made this statement unless the Sabbath was still going to be kept subsequent to His death.

## **New Testament Sabbath Keeping – Proof 2**

Here is a second proof that the Sabbath was kept in the New Testament and continued after Jesus was crucified. How many know that Luke's gospel was written 30 to 50 years after the cross? While on the subject of the crucifixion of Jesus, this is what Luke wrote in regards the body of Christ being prepared by His followers:

Luke 23:56 "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

Now this is one of the Ten Commandments that Luke has just referenced and it is breaking of the Ten Commandments that defines what sin is, and it does not get more important than that. A generation after the cross and Luke is still declaring this is a Commandment as we find Luke specifically going out of his way to state that they "*rested the Sabbath day according to the Commandment.*" Luke did not say, "*They rested on the Sabbath that used to be a Commandment*" or "*They rested on the Sabbath that is now the first day of the week.*" Here is the perfect opportunity for

Luke to say the Sabbath had changed or ended but to the contrary, he clearly states that they kept the Sabbath "*according to the Commandment.*"

Now for the real proof. The New Covenant was sealed and set in place by the blood of Jesus and Galatians 3:15 states that no man can ADD to it or TAKE away from it. Any lawyer will tell you that the will and testament of a person CANNOT be changed after a person has died.

Galatians 3:15 "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto."

Hebrews 9:16-17 NKJV "For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

Hebrews 9:16-17 above also states that the New Covenant is NOT in force until the death of the testator being Christ Jesus in this case. Did Jesus CHANGE or ABOLISH the Sabbath in His life? We know He didn't. He kept it His entire life as was His custom. (Luke 4:16) And if there were to be any change, than Jesus of course would have told His Apostles that He just spent His entire ministry with preparing them to establish His Church after His death. Now this verse in Luke is after the death of Christ, and if any scripture shows the Sabbath is still a Commandment after the death of Christ, than it has to be eternal and part of the New Covenant.

Luke 23:56 "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

So the New Covenant did not go into effect until after Christ died on the Friday, and nothing can be added or taken away from the New Covenant after Jesus ratified it on the cross. So it is in fact *not* possible for the Sabbath to have been ABOLISHED or CHANGED after the cross on this irrefutable evidence alone. This categorically proves the Sabbath remained after the cross and thus is part of the New Covenant.

We also find that on the weight of Hebrews 4:8-11, there is no doubt that the Sabbath does remain a Christian Holy Day. This passage is greatly misunderstood and even often abused to say that the Sabbath is now just resting in Jesus. But when done so this passage is not quoted in full and typically only the early part of the passage is referenced. And where is the scripture that literally says that Jesus changed His mind about not changing His law? Where is the scripture that says the Sabbath is no longer the Seventh day and all you have to do now is rest in Jesus? The fact is that there is not one and all we have is another appalling attempt at manipulating scripture to try and make it say what one wants it to say.

### **New Testament Sabbath Keeping – Proof 3**

While Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15 are very clear Commandments for Sabbath keeping in the Old Testament, Hebrews 4:9 is the clearest Commandment

we have in the New Testament for keeping the Sabbath. The Greek word for "rest" in this verse is "sabbatismos." So exactly how does the excuse "the Sabbath is now just resting in Jesus" as some say constitute "Sabbath keeping" or "Sabbath observance?" Resting in Jesus is not and could never be called Sabbath keeping or Sabbath observance. And why would you have to be concerned if you had to flee persecution on the Sabbath day as Jesus stated, (Matthew 24:20) if the Sabbath was just resting in Jesus? There would be no need for prayer or concern about having to *physically* flee persecution on the Sabbath if this were the case now would there? Those deceived and against the law of God had to come up with some way of justifying this passage and this was apparently the best explanation they could come up with!

### **Here are a few points that prove the Sabbath remains a physically rest.**

1. The Greek word for rest in Hebrews 4 is definitely a PHYSICAL rest as just seen.
2. Luke says "they rested the Sabbath day according to the Commandment" which was after the New Covenant began and yet Luke says they still *physically* kept the Sabbath according to the Commandment. Luke wrote this more than 30 years after the cross.
3. Isaiah 66:22-23 shows we PHYSICALLY keep the Sabbath in the New Heaven and Earth.
4. Jesus states that everyone was still PHYSICALLY keeping the Sabbath at 70 A.D.
5. It cannot be a spiritual rest if one had to worry with PHYSICALLY fleeing on the Sabbath.
6. Our Creator knew man needed a PHYSICAL rest at least one day a week and Jesus does not change that requirement.
7. God and His law changes not. Hebrews 13:8, Psalms 111:7-8, Luke 16:17

In his symposium "From Sabbath To The Lord's Day" on page 213, Professor Andrew T. Lincoln states the following in regards to taking "Sabbatismos" literally.

Therefore the literal translation of Hebrews 4:9 is, "There remains a Sabbath observance for the people of God." The internal evidence of the preceding verses also indicates that the Sabbath observance mentioned in Hebrews 4:9 has to be the Seventh day Sabbath rather than Sunday, which did not take on the name the Lord's Day until early in the fourth century.

Hebrews 4:8 states, "For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not afterward have spoken of another day." The word "another" in our English translations might give the appearance of a different day at a glance, however, there are two words for "another" in the Greek. "Allos" means "another of the same kind" while "heteros" means "another of a different kind." The word used in Hebrews 4:8 is "allos," meaning a Sabbath day of the same kind as referred to in Hebrews 4:5-8, that is, the Seventh day Sabbath. In Hebrews 4:7 the author uses the phrase "certain day." The Greek word for "certain" is "tis," and so the author is undoubtedly referencing a specific day and not just the general thought of an eternal rest. Therefore the force of Hebrews 3:11 through 4:11 is saying that there is still a promise of a Sabbath rest made to the

children of God "now" and it did not just pertain to those who lived in the time of David or those who were called into the promised land, but because Christians look toward the heavenly eternal rest, the type of the earthly Sabbath rest does remain or is literally "*left behind*" for Christians to observe today.

## **New Testament Sabbath Keeping – Proof 4**

The fourth proof comes from the fact that New Testament Sabbath keeping is woven into the very fabric of the *entire* New Testament. And hence we find that Jesus kept the Sabbath and is our perfect example (Luke 4:16), but some of course will claim the Sabbath ended at the cross. So what about the Apostles, Paul and the early Church? The New Testament actually shows that every single Christian kept the Seventh day Sabbath and there is in fact not one *legitimate* scripture showing as much as *one* single person keeping any other day as the Sabbath!

Note that Paul was a Pharisee and hence a Jew and states "*since I was a child ... to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.*"

Acts 26:4-5 "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

Now note in the following verse that we find that this is a Jewish synagogue and remember that the Jews have without change, all through history worshipped on what we call Saturday as they still do today. The Bible shows Paul *only* preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath as was his *custom* and *never* any other day. Three consecutive Sabbaths here for an example.

Acts 17:1-2 "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures."

The following verse reveals the perfect opportunity for Paul to preach on the first day of the week being Sunday, which he would do if the Sabbath was abolished or changed. So what did Paul do?

Acts 13:42 "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Paul has just finished preaching on the Seventh day Sabbath (Saturday) and we find the Gentiles (*not the Jews*) pleading with Paul to preach to them the next Sabbath. Here is a perfect opportunity for Paul to take advantage of preaching to them the very next day being the first day of the week or Sunday as we now know it. So did these Gentiles ask Paul to preach to them the very next day being Sunday, which would be fine if the Sabbath was abolished or changed? Not so! The Gentiles asked Paul to preach to them the *next* Sabbath where nearly the whole city came, both Jews and

Gentiles. This also shows that the Sabbath *was* a day of worship and that in Biblical times, this Sabbath worship was only done in the Church on this one special day, and that those trying to prove the Sabbath was changed to Sunday are attempting to prove a lie. So Paul preached in the Synagogue (Church) only on the Seventh day Sabbath regardless to whether it was only the Jews or only the Gentiles or both Jews and Gentiles. It was the same for everyone!

Acts 13:44 "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."

There is in fact not *one* single scripture that shows *one* single person worshipping in the Church (Synagogue) on the first day of the week being Sunday. There are many who erroneously claim the New Testament Church worshipped habitually on the first day of the week and yet none of their so called proofs even take place in the Church. If the Sabbath was abolished or had really been changed to Sunday, there would have to be at least *one* scripture showing at least *one* person worshipping in the Synagogue on Sunday. But note there is not one single scripture!

The verses typically abused that do not even take place in Church are Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2 and John 20:19. Acts 20:7 was after sunset and so was actually a Saturday meeting that ran late, and breaking bread was also a fellowship meal and was done every day (Acts 2:46) of the week. 1 Corinthians 16:2 was storing goods at home for the poor which would not be done on the Sabbath but the first opportunity after being Sunday. Believe it or not, some even use John 20:19 as their supposed proof by saying the apostles were celebrating the resurrection of Jesus on Sunday. But scripture shows that the apostles were hiding in fear of the Jews and did not even believe Jesus had been resurrected. Mark 16:11-14 shows Jesus rebuking them for their unbelief.

So we find that these three scriptures are nothing but very bad assumptions or even a deliberate attempt at deception. Not one of these verses even involves a Church meeting. This also reveals that Satan is trying to convince us of a lie. Why would he do that if the Sabbath was abolished or not important? Remember that there is not *one* solitary scripture in the New Testament showing *one* single person worshipping in the Church on Sunday or *any* other day of the week.

So when I say that the Sabbath is woven into the very fabric of the New Testament, I mean that all worship in the Church, all through the New Testament, before and after the cross, was always on the Seventh day Sabbath and *never* on any other day. So unlike those attempting to prove a fallacy, here are some verses that are not assumptions: Acts 13:14, Acts 13:27, Acts 13:42, 44, Acts 15:21, Acts 17:1-2, Acts 18:4, Luke 4:16, Luke 6:6, Luke 13:10, Mark 1:21 and Mark 6:2.

So we have seen that there is no shortage of evidence that shows the Sabbath was kept by both Jew and Gentile after the cross and very solid proof of both Jesus and Luke specifically stating that the fourth Commandment did continue after the cross as did all the Commandments. The Sabbath was even kept by Jesus in His death and we now know that the New Covenant cannot be changed after the death of the testator,

being Christ, and so could not have changed in honour of the resurrection though history shows some chose this path as a result of strong pressure due to hatred for Judaism. This however did not occur until 90-120 A.D. of which all leading historians agree. As late as the 90's in the first century as the last words of the New Testament were being written, the New Testament Church was *universally* observing the Seventh day Sabbath which is beyond dispute. This is practically a whole generation after the crucifixion of Christ. So if the day change did not take place in Apostolic times, then when did it first take place and why?

It was the year A.D. 49 when Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome since they rioted constantly at the instigation of Chrestus. The fact that on this occasion converted Jews like Aquila and Priscilla were expelled from the city together with the Jews (Acts 18:2) shows that the Romans did not distinguish between the Christians and the Jews. However, fourteen years later Nero identified the Christians as being a separate entity and well distinguished from the Jews. The political structure of Rome also gave both Jews and Gentiles good reason to separate themselves from one another which is something that had not happened elsewhere.

Towards the end of the first century, relations between the Jews and the Roman Empire had deteriorated seriously. The Romans had previously recognized Judaism as a legitimate religion and had even shown a degree of respect and even admiration for the religious principles of the Jews. But the Jewish wars that began around 66 A.D. changed all that.

The statistics of the bloodshed provided by contemporary historians is evidence of the Romans anger and vengeance upon the Jews. Tacitus (A.D. 56-117) gives an estimate of 600,000 Jewish fatalities from the A.D. 70 war. Under Vespasian (A.D. 69-79) both the Sanhedrin and the office of the High Priest were abolished and worship at the temple was forbidden. And Hadrian (A.D. 117-138) outlawed the practice of the Jewish religion.

These circumstances prompted Christians to develop a new identity which was not only characterized by a negative attitude toward the Jews, but also by the substitution of Jewish religious customs with new ones. So this "anti-Judaism" resulted in great pressure upon the early Christian Church to move away from anything that "*appeared Jewish*" including the Sabbath. Since Sunday was already popular throughout the Roman Empire as a day for sun worship, some Christian leaders (called the early "Church Fathers") began shifting from Sabbath to Sunday. "*Jesus Christ rose on Sunday!*" became their rationalizing cry. This change took place over a rather long period of time, but this is neither the very beginning or the end of the story.

For a detailed exegesis of the Sabbath to Sunday change, see [the Sabbath to Sunday change and who changed the Sabbath](#). For an extremely detailed account that even includes the origin of that mysterious number 666, see [who changed the Sabbath to Sunday](#).

The Sabbath was made in the creation week and we will continue to keep it in the New Heaven and Earth for all eternity. All Ten Commandments are eternal and are

symbolized as such by God writing them in stone. Have you ever heard the expression we can change that because it is not written stone? There was a temporary sacrificial law that was for Israel only that had yearly ceremonial sabbaths such as Passover and these were added as a result of sin and why they did end at the cross. These were written on paper by Moses and this is where God would have put His weekly Sabbath if it were to end at the cross. However, He did not. God wrote it in stone along with the other nine Commandments!

Isaiah 66:22-23 "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD."

There is an astonishing number of Christians teaching that the Sabbath has ended based on confusion between the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial law. The most common misunderstandings are Colossians 2:16, Galatians 4:10 and Romans 14:5. These Christians have no understanding of the Hebrew sanctuary service and should remain silent and stop leading others astray if their knowledge is that limited. There is no mistaking what spirit is being listened to when some even foolishly try and manipulate or deny *all* the historical records on how the Sabbath to Sunday change did occur. See Colossians 2:16 for the truth on these passages.

## **New Covenant Sabbath Conclusion**

There is absolutely no doubt that the entire New Testament Church throughout the time in which the New Testament was being written, observed the Sabbath on the day we call Saturday. And there is absolutely no doubt that the day of worship was changed to Sunday *after* the last of the Apostles died. But the question that must be answered is whether that change was authorized by God or whether it was against His will. There is in fact no question that it was not authorized and we have also seen that it is impossible for it to have been. And not forgetting the abundance of accredited historical records that reveals the real truth on how the Sabbath was changed.