



REMEMBER THE SABBATH

By Joey Hickey

Just over four years ago, I had the privilege of attending a college course called, "Survey of the Old Testament." Though I enjoyed my Bible-related classes, I was struck by my professor's claim one particular morning. He said, essentially, "I believe we should still keep the Sabbath today." I found it particularly strange that in the same institution one professor could claim Galatians 5:4 teaches we are not bound to any law--which is an erroneous, shallow view of the text--and another professor would claim we are still to keep the Sabbath. Within recent weeks, a co-worker and friend of mine asserted the same thing: "We should keep the Sabbath."

Should we keep the Sabbath?

The short answer is found in Colossians 2:16-17. "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." The Jews had 12 new moons: they celebrated holidays such as the Passover and Pentecost. Paul here flatly teaches these celebrations are no longer relevant in our endeavor to honor God; they, with the rest of the Old Law, simply, "led us to Christ" (Galatians 3:24), in reference to himself and the rest of the Jews. This teaching leads us to an important New Testament principle: we are not bound to any command of the Old Testament unless upheld in the New Testament.

Jeremiah prophesied of a "new covenant" in Jeremiah 31:31-33, proclaiming this law would be "written on their hearts." Verse 32 expounds on this new covenant, stating it is "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers." This prophecy has been fulfilled

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(Hebrews 8:6-13), and the old covenant is no longer binding (Hebrews 8:13). That covenant was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14).

The Old Law, then, has already served its purpose. Romans 10:4 teaches, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes." While we will be judged by our deeds (Matthew 16:27), we will not be judged by Jewish rituals and customs made before Christ, unless retaught in the New Testament.

But, some might say, the Sabbath was called a perpetual covenant between God and his people forever! Let us look at that passage. Exodus 31:16-17: "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."

In verse 17, the Hebrew word "leolam" is translated, "forever"; however, "leolam" is not always translated forever. It can be translated "for a long time" or "for the foreseeable future." That same word in Isaiah 42:14 is translated "a long time." In Jeremiah 2:20, "leolam" is rendered "of old."

In 1st Chronicles 17:17, after being translated "forever" in verse 14, "leolam" is translated "a great while to come." Clearly, "leolam" does not always mean "forever."

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If, however, we are to keep all "forever" and "perpetual" ordinances of the Old Testament, we must keep the Passover (Exodus 12:17) and offer burnt offerings for our sins (Exodus 29:39-42). In addition, whoever is not "afflicted in soul" or works on the tenth of July will be cut off or destroyed (Leviticus 23:28-31). If we're to take Exodus 31 literally, those who profane the Sabbath will be put to death (Exodus 31:14). But we can know God has lifted that law and to it we are no longer bound (Colossians 2:16-17). We are under a better covenant (2 Corinthians 3:3-11).

Since we are not to observe the Sabbath, then what day must Christians observe? The Divine records that the disciples heard a sermon and "broke bread" on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). On this day, Jesus instituted His supper, called the breaking of bread, thus leaving an example for us to follow. Paul taught that, in keeping this ordinance, disciples would "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). As well scripture records that Christians at Galatia were "given orders" to take a collection "on the first day of the week" (1 Corinthians 16:2). By command and example, then, scripture teaches that the Lord's Day of the New Testament is the first day of the week.



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Upcoming Gospel Meetings

November 14 - 18 Fossil Creek CHURCH OF CHRIST

3517 North Beach Street
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Speaker: Ronny Wade
7:30 pm (14th - 16th)
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November 28 - December 2 CHURCH OF CHRIST on Green Oaks

4601 S. W. Green Oaks Blvd.
Arlington, TX
Speaker: Frank Brancato
7:30 pm (28th - 30th)
6:00 pm (1st)
10:00 am & 2:30 PM (2nd)

We support Brett Hickey's message, and the truths taught in the Bible for all mankind. We assist bringing this TV program to the north Texas area, and are glad you have watched the program! We would like you to visit any of our worship services!

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