

Why The Sabbath?

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As someone who grew up worshiping on Sunday, the Sabbath was a foreign concept. I was aware of Seventh Day Adventist; however, it was not taught within mainstream christendom.

My close friend Pastor Janita Williams introduced me to Congregation KoAch Bethel, a Commandment Keeping Assembly. Walking into 1014 - 16 E. Chelton Avenue gave me a nostalgic feeling. Growing up in a classical pentecostal church many of the women covered their heads with hats, we had testimony service, we would dance fast, everyone had a tambourine, and when we came to church we purposely came to have church. I felt that same feeling walking into KoAch. However, I always told my friend I would never become a Sabbath Keeper and to this day I am not a Sabbath Keeper. I am a commandment keeper. I have a different understanding and appreciation for the Sabbath and The Ten Commandments.

To fully understand the Sabbath we must reference Genesis.

“And on the seventh day God ended His work . . . and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:2-3).

God did not rest because He was tired, neither was it because He ran out of ideas or creativity. God intentionally created the Sabbath and was the first person to observe the sabbath.

“Creativity/ Art is the gift of God, and must be used unto His glory.” ~ Michelangelo.

After spending six days creating a place for man to dwell, God established a day for man to rest. Not only did God create a day for man to rest, He blessed that particular day and sanctified it unto Himself. He set it apart unlike any other day. He created a day specifically for *man*.

“...wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20)

“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” (Mark 2:27-28)

The Pharisees were trying to accuse the disciples of “working” on the Sabbath because they walked past a field and plucked heads of grain. Jesus expresses to them that the Sabbath was made to help man, not burden them. Ultimately, the Sabbath was a gift to man. If God gave us a gift, why would He take it back? The Pharisaical law had turned the Sabbath into a burden, adding restrictions beyond what God said.

Out of the 10 commandments, that's the 1 we choose not to follow. We say things like “The Sabbath was abolished,” “Jesus is our Sabbath,” “The Sabbath was only for the Jews.” These are quoted and have often led people astray from God’s truth.

Was God’s / The Mosaic Law abolished?

Sin can be defined as the violation of God’s command. What is God’s original command?

“And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.” - Exodus 20:1-17 (KJV)

If God’s law was abolished we could assume that there is no such thing as “sin.” However, John the Apostle writes a letter to the believers concerning sin and the commandments.

“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.” 1 John 2:1-6 (NIV)

How did Jesus live? Jesus governed himself under the Mosaic law. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus himself said,

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:17-19 (KJV)

If we are followers of Christ, why would we not want to follow what He followed? Do we not love God? John the Apostle wrote concerning our love for God and keeping His commandments.

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” 1 John 5:2-3 (KJV)

It is commonly said, “Jesus is our Sabbath.”

Many Christians will quote Hebrews 4 to defend that Jesus is our Sabbath. They teach that once we enter into our “New Life” with Christ, He becomes our Sabbath. The main message of Hebrews 4 is to emphasize the believer's rest by grace. The main point of Hebrews 4:11 is that Christians would remain in the faith and not fall into unbelief and disobedience like their fathers. But the reference to the Sabbath in Hebrews 4 is not a shadow of that rest in Christ, but an example of that rest. In verse 10 Paul gives us an

example by saying, “as God did from His.” He is comparing the rest we will have in Christ as God rested on the Sabbath after creating for 6 days.

Another commonly quoted saying, “As New Testament believers / Gentiles we don’t have to follow the law.”

This saying is untrue. The First Century Church observed the Seventh Day Sabbath, The Feast of the Lord, and followed the commandments. As a Pentecostal congregation, we establish our core beliefs and teachings out of the Acts of the Apostles. Acts was written by Luke, a Gentile. According to Luke the Sabbath was observed by Jews, Greeks, and Gentiles.

“But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” Acts 13:14-15 (KJV)

And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.” Acts 13: 42-43

“And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” Acts 16:13-14 (KJV)

“And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.” Acts 18:4 (KJV)

“But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.” Acts 18: 21 (KJV)

“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.” Acts 20: 6

“For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.” Acts 20:16

Luke, the Gentile wrote concerning the sabbath and the feast at minimum 10 times. Paul, the Apostle, who we accredit to be the leader of the New Testament church continued in following the Seventh Day Sabbath and Observing the Feast Days.

Scholars argue that Paul teaches against the sabbath and the feast days; however, we must put scripture in its correct context and content. Here are some of the several used scriptures to counteract against following the Sabbath and observing the feast days.

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.” Romans 14: 5-6 (KJV)

Paul was not referring to the Sabbath or the law. Five chapters before Paul said that the law was holy, just, and good. It is the law that teaches us sin. He also said that he delights in the law.

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” Romans 7:7 (KJV)

“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Romans 7:12 (KJV)

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:” Romans 7:22 (KJV)

Paul sums up this seventh chapter nicely by saying, in my mind I want to follow God’s law but my old nature is a slave to sin’s law.

So what was Paul talking about in Romans 14? If you study Romans 14 scholars refer to the Talmud (The Talmud is the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law (halakha) and Jewish theology). There had been an issue with fasting within the Jewish Faith. Some fasted on Mondays and others on Thursday, so Paul wanted to bring them to a common ground.

Another commonly quoted scripture in Galatians 4:8-10

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.”

The Galatian church consisted of Gentiles. Paul says to them, “how return...” If gentiles knew not God, how could they turn back to something they did not observe? In order to understand this we must read the scriptures above.

“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:”
Galatians 4:3

Paul was reminding them that before they knew God they were under bondage and they observed days, months, times, and years.

Also used in the defense that we don't have to observe the Sabbath is Colossians 2: 16-17

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

Context is very important to scripture. We should read the verses above to ensure that we aren't picking one scripture to defend our argument. The verses above clearly shows that the Colossian congregation was being influenced by those who did not share their faith or convictions.

“And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Colossians 2:4-8 (KJV)

Paul isn't telling them to stop observing; however, he is encouraging them to continue in their faith even while being judged by others.

Another scripture often used to refute the validity of the sabbath is Colossians 2:14 (KJV)

“ Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; ”

Here in this scripture Paul references the blotting out of the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. Study of this scripture will show that Paul was not talking about the Ten Commandments. Paul was referring to Deut. 31:26, where the levites were to place the “Book of the Law,” which was written by Moses and place it “in the side” of the ark, that it may be a witness “against thee.”

“So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. Then Moses commanded them: “At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing.” Deuteronomy 31:9-11 (KJV)

The Laws of Moses were given by Moses to regulate the children of Israel beyond the ten commandments. The ten commandments were placed “inside” the ark. Scholars suggest that this was the book that was found in the house of the Lord having been misplaced in the days of Josiah (2nd Chronicles 34:14).

It is often said, “We aren’t Jews.” This statement is true. We aren’t Jews, but are likened unto Israel. When one is adopted, although they may not have your blood they become your family. They have the same responsibility as someone who shares your blood. Christians have become comfortable with receiving the inheritance without accepting the responsibility. We love the promises given to Abraham, Issac, and Jacob; however, we don’t want the responsibility of following the commandments. Once we were grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel we received the promise; however, Paul reminds us that we can be cut off.

“Do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.” Romans 11:18-21

So why do we follow Sunday and not Sabbath Day?

Many Christians follow Sunday for two reasons:

- 1) Matthew 28:1 says, “After the Sabbath...” They infer that because the Sabbath ended when Mary visited Jesus that became the “Lord’s Day.” *“He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.” Matthew 28:4 (KJV)*
- 2) Not all Christians worship on Sunday. There are several believers that worship on the Sabbath (Pentecostal, Apostolic, Baptist). Many Christians worship on Sunday not knowing it was the Catholic Church that changed the day of worship. Attached I have added two images directly from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

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Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.

Q. By what authority did the Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?

A. The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her.

Leviticus 23:3 lets us know that we should worship and rest on the Sabbath day.

“Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, *a holy convocation*. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.”

If we believe the whole bible is the infallible word of God, why do we choose which commandments we want to follow. I say this to the reader, “Don't tell me which God you serve, show me by which commandments you keep.”

Preference Scripture References

Although there are many scriptures in the Bible that references the Sabbath and following the commandments, these are the ones I enjoy the most.

Old Testament

Genesis 2:2-3
Exodus 20
Exodus 31:15-18
Exodus 35:2
Leviticus 16:31
Deuteronomy 5:12
Deuteronomy 5:29
Deuteronomy 10:13
Psalm 1:1-3
Proverbs 29:18
Ecclesiastes 12:13
Isaiah 58:13-14
Ezekiel 46:1

New Testament

Matthew 5:17-19
Mark 2: 27-28
Acts 13:14
Acts 13:42-44
Acts 16:13
Acts 17:2
Acts 18:4
Romans 3:31
Romans 7:12
Romans 7:22
Romans 15:4
1 John 2:3-4
1 John 5:2-3
Revelation 14:12
Revelation 22:14