

**Should
A Christian
Keep the
Old
Jewish
Sabbath?**



by

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SHOULD A CHRISTIAN KEEP THE OLD JEWISH SABBATH?

This is a question which many people have asked, the answers to which have been diverse and confusing. In order to get the correct answer to the question, it is necessary to make a study of the Old Covenant, of which the Sabbath was a part, and the New Covenant, which replaced the Old. Such a study will reveal when the Sabbath was given, to whom it was given, why it was given, and whether or not the Sabbath should be observed today.

Before we take up the study of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, let us consider the definition of the word "covenant" itself. The word "covenant" means "a conditional agreement, or contract, between two parties with binding conditions affecting both parties concerned."

THE OLD COVENANT GIVEN

The Old Covenant, or Mosaic Covenant, was a proposal by God to Israel given through Moses at Sinai. No other nation or groups of people were present at the time. Israel accepted the terms of the covenant, and it became binding upon that nation until the terms of the contract were fulfilled.

"And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountains, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." (Ex. 19:3-8)

The Old Covenant was made 2,500 years after creation and 430 years after Abraham.

"And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deut. 5:1-3)

"And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. 4:8)

"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." (Gal. 3:17)

The Old Covenant was given because of the promise made to Abraham.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3)

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 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. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise:

but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” (Gal. 3:13-18)

The Old Covenant was also given because of man’s sin and as a “schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.” Through the Old Covenant, or the law, man was made to realize that he could not meet God’s standard of righteousness and needed a Saviour.

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Gal. 3:19-25)

THE OLD COVENANT IS THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Old Covenant was officially formed with a constitution known as the “Ten Commandments”.

“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 maid-servant, 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 commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's." (Ex. 20:1-17)

Primarily and specifically, the Ten Commandments as given at Sinai are spoken of as "that covenant".

"When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: And the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone even the tables of the covenant." (Deut. 9:9, 10, 11)

And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, that he made with the children of Israel." (II Chron. 6:11)

"There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt." (II Chron. 5:10).

"There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the

Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt." (I Kings 8:9)

"And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt." (I Kings 8:21)

The Old Covenant was the one which the Lord wrote on two tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments.

"And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone." (Deut. 4:12, 13)

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." (Ex. 34:27, 28)

This Covenant, or Ten Commandments, which was given at Sinai had no prior existence.

"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire saying", and then Moses repeats the Ten Commandments. He concludes: "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness with a great voice, and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone and delivered them unto me." (Deut. 5:2-22).

What, then, was this Covenant which God made with Israel and which He declared had no prior existence? It was the Ten Commandments God spoke when Moses stood between the Lord and Israel. It was the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone.

The ark (used in tabernacle and temple worship) was made to contain the "Ten Commandment Covenant" and was, therefore, called the "ark of the covenant". This ark contained the two tables of stone upon which were written the Ten Commandments.

The Old Covenant included not only the Ten Commandments but also all civil and ceremonial laws which were based upon and related to the Ten Commandments. The civil and ceremonial laws are recorded in detail in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them." (Ex. 24:12)

"These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses." (Lev. 26:46)

"These are the commandments and judgments, which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho." (Num. 36:13)

"These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb." (Deut. 29:1)

Moses wrote the complete law, the Ten Commandments and all civil and ceremonial laws, in a book called the "Book of the Covenant". This "Book of Covenant" was put in the ark of the covenant for a permanent record.

"And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." (Ex. 24:7)

"And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the

side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them." (Deut. 31:24-26; 28)

"Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary." (Heb. 9:1 RSV)

The Old Covenant was ratified by blood.

"And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." (Ex. 24:8)

"Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.'" (Heb. 9:18-20 RSV)

THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH BECAME A PART OF THE OLD COVENANT

Immediately prior to the forming of the Old Covenant, God revealed and explained to Israel the keeping of the seventh day as a holy Sabbath unto the Lord which was to become a part of the proposed Old Covenant. God called Moses to be His mouth-piece to Israel, and Israel's teacher and leader. (Ex. 4:12)

God revealed to Moses the story of man from creation. He informed Moses that in six days He created the world and all that is in it, and on the seventh day He rested from all His works. In forming the Covenant between Himself and Israel, God set the seventh day aside as a Holy Sabbath and as a special "sign" of the Covenant. This was the first time in history that the seventh day was called "Sabbath" ("rest from labor"). There is no evidence in the Bible that man knew anything about a Sabbath until this time.

Some may ask if Abraham and others did not keep commandments. Certainly, they did, for beginning with Adam, man was given commandments to keep, but the commandment to observe the seventh day as a Holy Sabbath was not given until it was revealed to Israel through Moses.

"And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe: and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a sabbath unto the Lord; today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." (Ex. 16:23-30)

"Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." (Neh. 9:13-14)

The Sabbath was given to Israel as a reminder of God's miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

"Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt 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, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger

that is within thy gate; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” (Deut. 5:12-15)

The Bible plainly teaches that the Sabbath was given to Israel as a peculiar sign, or badge, of that people; and as such, it was binding on *them* and them alone. Definitely and specifically, it was a sign between God and Israel only.

“Speak thou also unto the children of Israel saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. . . . Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” Ex. 31:13, 16, 17)

“Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” (Ezek. 20:10-12)

THE GENTILES WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE OLD COVENANT

The Gentiles were not included in the Old Covenant. Israel was the only nation with whom God made the covenant.

“And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him (Isaac) for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed (Israel) after him. And as for Ishmael (Gentiles), I have heard

thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But, my covenant, will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year." (Gen. 17:19-21)

"For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day." (Deut. 4:7, 8)

"And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deut. 5:1-3)

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." (Rom. 2:14)

There is no scripture in the Bible which states that the Gentiles were included in the Old Covenant, nor which puts them in any way under obligations to it. The Gentile servants, however, who were "within the gates of Israel" were obliged to conform to the laws of the Old Covenant, but with many restrictions.

There were restrictions on those who could not participate in the passover (Ex. 12:43-45); holy oil was not to be placed upon strangers (Ex. 30:33); death was the penalty for any stranger who came near the tabernacle (Num. 1:51); Israelites could not eat animals which died of themselves but could sell the meat to strangers (Deut. 14:21); Gentiles could not become kings over Israel (Deut. 17:15); Israelites could not charge interest to their brethren but they could to Gentiles (Deut. 23:19-20); a widow was not to marry a stranger (Deut. 25:5); and the Israelites separated themselves from Gentiles when they repented (Neh. 9:2).

Jesus Himself lived under the Old Covenant, and during His ministry, before His death and resurrec-

tion, showed a definite distinction between Gentiles and Jews. He commanded His disciples not to go to the Gentiles nor the Samaritans, but only to the House of Israel (Matt. 10:5, 6).

Also, Jesus showed this same distinction when He told the Gentile woman that "that which is bread (referring to the Old Covenant) is not for the dogs (Gentiles), but only for "the children (Israel) sitting at the Master's table." (Matt. 15:21-28)

Jesus Himself observed the terms of the Old Covenant during His ministry. (Luke 4:16-19; Luke 18:18-24), and He denounced those who corrupted the Law (Luke 11:39-54).

It was not until after His death and resurrection that Jesus made no distinction between Gentile and Jew and commanded His disciples to preach the gospel to every creature and every nation.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19).

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

THE OLD COVENANT COMES TO AN END

The Old Covenant was broken by Israel when through her disobedience to God, she failed to keep her part of the covenant; and thus God abolished it.

"Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the callings of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." (Isa. 1:13, 14)

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." (Isa. 24:5).

This is further emphasized in Zech. 11:10-14:

"And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel."

This prophetic scene belongs to the first advent of Christ. "Beauty" and "bands" literally mean "graciousness" and "union". "Graciousness" signifies God's attitude toward His people Israel in sending His son. "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son." (Matt. 21:37)

"Union" signifies His purpose to reunite Judah and Ephraim (Ezek. 37:15-22). Christ, at His first advent, came with "grace". "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) He offered "union" but was rejected and sold for thirty pieces of silver.

"Beauty", that is, "graciousness", was "cut in sunder" (vs. 10, 11) signifying that Judah was abandoned as foretold in Zech. 11:1-6. After the rejection of the Lord for thirty pieces of silver (Vs. 12-14; Matt. 26:14-16), "bands", that is, "union" was broken, signifying the abandonment of the purpose to unite Judah and Israel.

The events in Zechariah are as follows: (1) the wrath of God against the "Land of the Covenant" fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. (Luke 21:20-24); (2) the dispersion of the "covenant people" (Israel) (Luke 21:24); (3) the abolishment of the Ten Commandment Covenant.

It is the third one, the abolition of the Old Covenant, with which we are concerned here, and there are many Scriptures which confirm its abolishment.

"I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." (Hosea 2:11)

"And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest. (Lam. 2:6)

Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Covenant.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17)

"The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." (Luke 16:16)

"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me, Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:44-47)

After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Old Covenant was abolished, for it was no longer in effect. Christ was its fulfillment. Paul stated that the law *"was added . . . till the seed should come."* (Gal. 3:19)

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4)

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." (Eph. 2:14-15)

"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; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 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." (Col. 2:14-17)

In II Cor. 3:3-14, where the Apostle Paul discusses the Old and New Covenants, he states that the covenant which was written and engraven in stone (vs. 7) "is done away" (vs. 11), and "abolished" (vs. 13). He further states that this covenant which was done away and abolished was the one given by Moses when he came from speaking with God and Israel could not look at his face because of the glory (vs. 7). Since the covenant which Moses had when he came down from Mt. Sinai was the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:27-34), it follows that this is the one which was "done away" and "abolished". There can be no question as to this.

Also, the Apostle Paul in Gal. 4:21-30 and Gal. 5:1-4, likens the Ten Commandments, the covenant of Sinai, to Abraham's bondwoman, Hagar, and closes the argument with the admonition to "cast out the bondwoman (the Ten Commandment Covenant), with her son (all the amplifications of the Old Covenant) and to stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ has made us free." Here again the emphasis is on the fulfillment or end of the Old Covenant.

The writer of Hebrews, likewise, makes it clear that the Old Covenant is no longer in effect.

"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." (Heb. 7:12, 22)

"In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Heb. 8:13).

"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." (Heb. 10:9)

The Seventh Day Sabbath observance was abolished when the Old Covenant was done away. The weekly sabbath is classed with ceremonial feasts, new moons, and annual observances. (Lev. 23:2-8; Ezek. 45:17; Lam. 2:6; Hosea 2:11; Neh. 10:33; I Chron. 23:30, 31; II Chron. 31:3)

In Col. 2:14, Paul speaks of the "handwriting of ordinances", and some people say that this does not refer to the Ten Commandments. However, they are called "ordinances" in II Kings 17:37: "And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandments, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore." The only commandments God wrote are the Ten Commandments. (Ex. 31:18). Also, the word translated "ordinances" in Col. 2:14 and Eph. 2:15 is from the Greek word "dogma" which means "precept", "command", or "law".

THE NEW COVENANT IS ESTABLISHED

God promised that He would make a New Covenant with Israel.

"Behold, the day comes, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. 31:31-33)

"Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely; And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from

me, Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord: Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have proclaimed them.” (Jer. 32-37-42)

“In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.” (Jer. 50:4, 5)

The New Covenant had its beginning at the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 5:17, 18; Luke 16:16; Luke 24:44-48; Rom. 7:4; Rom. 10:1-4; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14-17; Gal. 3:19-25; Gal. 5:1-4; Heb. 9:15-17; Heb. 12:24; Heb. 13:20, 21)

The New Covenant was established, not upon the law of God through Moses, but upon the law of God through Christ; not upon the Ten Commandments, but upon the commandments of Christ. In the New Covenant many laws and commandments of the Old Covenant were both included and excluded. The law and commandments of the New Covenant are those voiced by the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles *after the resurrection* of Jesus Christ, for His death was the culmination of the Old and His resurrection was the guarantee of the New.

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:1-3)

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners

spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. . . ." (Heb. 1:1, 2)

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." (Heb. 2:3) (See also Matt. 5:21-44; Matt. 17:5; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 14:15-26; John 15:10; Acts 3:22-26; I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; I Thes. 4:1, 2)

The New Covenant included the Gentiles as well as Israel.

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." (Isa. 11:10)

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." (Isa. 42:1, 6)

"And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (Isa. 49:6)

"For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke 2:30-32)

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34, 35) (See also Acts 11:1-18)

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you (Jews): but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles, For so hath the Lord commanded us saying, I have set thee to be

a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Acts 13:46, 47)
(See also Acts 28:25-31)

Paul also explains further in his epistles that the Gentiles were included in the New Covenant. (Rom. 9:24-33; Rom. 11:8-25; Rom. 15:4-13; Eph. 2:1-22; Eph. 3:1-12; Gal. 3:6-29)

The "mystery" which Paul speaks about in Eph. 3:4, 9 was not salvation, but God's divine plan to make Gentiles and Jews one new body in which all earthly distinction disappears.

"That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph. 3:6)

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." (Col. 3:10, 11)

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (I Cor. 12:12, 13) (See also Rom. 10:11, 12)

The New Covenant is for "whosoever will".

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13) (See also John 3:16; John 5:24; John 6:40, 47; John 7:37, 38; Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:39; Rev. 22:17)

THE NEW COVENANT IS BETTER THAN THE OLD COVENANT

In several ways the New Covenant which God made is better than the Old Covenant. Not only does the New Covenant include "whosoever will", but it was also established on better promises.

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." (Heb. 8:6)

The New Covenant was to be written on the heart of man — the Old Covenant was written on tables of stone.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." (Rom. 8:10).

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." (II Cor. 3:3) (See also Matt. 22:37-39; Heb. 10:16)

The New Covenant provided that sin can be entirely wiped out. The Old Covenant made provision that sin be covered only.

"For I will be merciful to their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. 8:12)

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:7, 9) (See also Rom. 4:7, 8; Heb. 9:11-14; Heb. 10:1-18)

The New Covenant provided simple means of worship.

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when thre true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23, 24)

Sacrifices and ceremonies are no longer necessary.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in

the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:23-26) (See also Heb. 10:1-18)

The New Covenant provided direct contact between the sinner and God through Jesus Christ. The high priest mediation was no longer necessary.

"Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:19-22)

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:14-16)

THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH EXCLUDED FROM THE NEW COVENANT

Among the many laws and commandments which were included in the Old Covenant and excluded from the New Covenant were the ceremonies, feast days, and *all Sabbath days*.

Under the New Covenant we are not told to keep one day any more holy than another.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. 2:16, 17) (See also Gal. 4: 9-11; Rom. 14:4-10)

It is amazing how those who observe the Seventh Day Sabbath spend time, money, and effort proclaiming the doctrine of Seventh Day Sabbath keeping, which does not concern the Christian at all; and yet deliberately ignore and disobey the commandments which Jesus and His Apostles gave so specifically to the Church. For instance, the gathering in of offerings on the first day of the week. They never do that. Also, the commandment not to judge others in the matter of keeping certain days and Sabbaths. They condemn and judge all Christians who worship God on Sunday in the strongest possible terms saying that they are followers of the "Anti-Christ", have the "mark of the Beast", etc. Before condemning others, they should obey the two greatest commandments. (Matt. 22:37-39)

It may well be said to the observers of the Seventh Day Sabbath: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do you not *HEAR the law?*" (Gal. 4:21) "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10)

Also, their so-called Sabbath keeping is in a manner unlike that which God commanded Israel. They shop, joy-ride, hire printers to work on their newspaper ads, etc., on the Seventh Day. It is a somewhat modern streamlined "Sabbath keeping."

Before the establishment of the Old Covenant, there was no Seventh Day Sabbath. After the establishment of the New Covenant, there is *no Seventh Day Sabbath*. The Seventh Day Sabbath was for the duration of the Old Covenant only.

All the commandments and ordinances under the Old Covenant were in connection with the "Promised Land" (Palestine). That is the reason for the name "Holy Land" because it was in that land that the Holy Commandments of the Lord to Israel were to be obeyed. The universal keeping of the Sabbath is impossible, for the Sabbath was to be kept from sun down the sixth day to sun down the seventh day. There are some parts of the earth where the sun never goes down for several months during the year (the "Land of the Midnight Sun"); hence, in that part of

the world the Sabbath could not be kept consistently.

The breaking of the Jewish Sabbath as given under the Old Covenant is *never* listed among the sins and transgressions under the New Covenant.

WHY CHRISTIANS WORSHIP ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Since the beginning of the New Covenant, that is, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, no commandment has been given to keep the old "Ten Commandment Sabbath" holy. Immediately upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we find this scripture: "In the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." (Matt. 28:1). It is significant to note here that the word "week" is the word "Sabbath" in Greek. So this scripture should read as follows: "In the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first of the Sabbath." In every case where the word "week" is rendered in the English translation, the word "sabbath" appears, without exception, in the Greek.

It is further quite significant that we find the "first of the Sabbath" mentioned often in the New Testament. From the scriptures we learn it became a custom in the early church to meet together on the "first of the Sabbath". Since the "first day of the week" in Greek is called "the first day of the Sabbath", and that "Sabbath" means "rest", it should prove conclusively that the first day of the week is a "day of rest".

Let us note events which happened on the "first of the Sabbath" as recorded in the New Testament.

1. Jesus arose from the dead on "the first of the Sabbath". (Matt. 28:1-6).

2. Jesus met Mary on "the first of the Sabbath".

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." (Mark 16:9)

3. Jesus held His first public meeting with His disciples on "the first of the Sabbath".

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the

disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." (John 20:19).

4. Jesus held His second meeting with His disciples on "the first of the Sabbath".

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." (John 20:26)

5. The Holy Spirit fell upon the church on "the first of the Sabbath" (Day of Pentecost). (Acts 2:1-4)

6. The disciples conducted their public meetings and communion service on "the first of the Sabbath".

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. . . ." (Acts 20:7)

7. Collections of saints were received on "the first of the Sabbath".

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Cor. 16:1, 2)

However, this command was not limited to the Corinthians and to the church of Galatia, for Paul addresses his epistle to "all in every place who call upon the name of the Lord". (I Cor. 1:1-4) Therefore, this command is to all Christians even down to the present time. Also, Paul said that the one who thinks he is spiritual should acknowledge that the things he writes are the commandments of the Lord (I Cor. 14:37).

Here, then, is a specific commandment of the Lord regarding a religious duty, a religious observance of the "first day of the week" ("first of the Sabbath"). "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store ("storehouse" — Mal. 3:10 — or

"church") as God hath prospered him." (I Cor. 16:2) The Revised Standard Version reads: "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper."

Why did Paul say to do this on the "first day of the week", if the seventh day was the proper day for Christians to observe? Do the Seventh Day Sabbath keepers take up their collections on the "first day of the week"? Indeed, not. It is their universal custom to do this on Saturday because that is their regular day of worship, and they would fail to get the necessary funds were they to take up their collections on any other day. Paul specifically states that the Corinthians should collect their money on the "first of the Sabbath" so there would be no collection when he came. Why should Paul choose this particular day and not another? Because it was their custom to meet on the "first of the Sabbath", so that day would be the most appropriate to "gather in" the money.

The foregoing proves that the "first day of the week" ("first of the Sabbath") was considered and observed by the Apostles and early Christians in their time as the proper or regular day for Christians to assemble for worship. To this custom or practice, all early Christian writers bear universal testimony. They all agree that Sunday was the regular day for Christians to assemble for worship. Also, without a single exception, they never apply the term "Lord's Day" to the seventh day of the week. Whenever they speak of any specific day of the week, it is "the first day of the week".

Where the Seventh Day Sabbath observers apply the term "Lord's Day" of Rev. 1:10 to the seventh day of the week, they do so in direct opposition to all Greek lexicons, and all the authoritative writers of the early church. It is only by an unwarranted and perverse misapplication of Scripture that it is made to refer to the Sabbath.

Actually, we may set aside any day to worship the Lord. (Rom. 14:1-10) However, if there is any Sabbath to be recognized, it should be the "first of the Sabbath", which is the first day of the week. This cus-

tom which began with the Apostles and disciples has continued down through the centuries to the present day. It is still the custom of Christ's disciples to meet on the "first of the Sabbath" and any other day which they may choose.

It has been said that the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath to Sunday, but this is not true. The Catholic Church simply put its official approval upon that which had already been practiced by the Apostles and the early church from the very beginning. I quote from the article "Sunday" in the Catholic Encyclopedia: "Sunday was the first day of the week according to the Jewish method of reckoning, but for Christians it began to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath in Apostolic Times as the day set apart for public and solemn worship of God."

I quote further from early church writers which proves the "first day of the week" was the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord's Day:

The epistle of Barnabas (100 A.D.): "Wherefore, also we keep the 8th day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose from the dead."

The epistle of Ignatius (107 A.D.), a pupil of the Apostles and whose writings were commended by Polycarp, a friend of St. John: "And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all days."

The writings of Justin Martyr (145 A.D.): "But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day of the week, and Jesus Christ, our Saviour, on the same day rose from the dead."

Clement of Alexandria (174 A.D.) says: "The old seventh day has become nothing more than a working day."

Tertullian (200 A.D.) wrote: "We observe the day of the Lord's resurrection, laying aside our worldly business."

Origen (185-255 A.D.) wrote: "John, the Baptist, was born to make ready a people for the Lord, a people fit for Him at the end of the covenant, now grown old, which is the end of the Sabbath. It is one of the marks of a perfect Christian to keep the Lord's day."

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, (250 A.D.) wrote: "The 8th day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, is the Lord's Day."

Thus, we conclude that Christians are to obey and teach not the Old Covenant, Ten Commandments, but the New Covenant, the law of Christ. Christ, of necessity, preached and lived in perfect obedience to the Old Covenant. The utterances of Christ pertaining to His future church were based upon the New Covenant. Thus, in the Gospels we find a mixture of both the Old and New Covenant teaching. But in Acts and the Epistles, the teaching is based entirely upon the New Covenant.

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