

The Sabbath or Sunday?

Except a few hundred years the last two thousand years Sabbath is no longer kept by most Christians, but Sunday is celebrated as the day of the Lord. There are reasons for this of course. Well known church leaders have thought about that and formulated a number of doctrines.

What thoughts or teachings on the Sabbath or Sunday there are, it is good to examine those thoughts or doctrines to what the Bible says about those things.

So it seems good to me to explore everything in the Bible to be found at that subject. We will do this, to begin with, without conclusions. Only when we have read all the Bible portions and discussed those on this subject, we will try to establish the biblical directive to keep the Sabbath or Sunday.

You can say what dogmatic! I can't believe that I will get closer to the Lord by being busy with this kind of things. I dare to doubt that. The Bible is full of things we call 'dogmatic'. Yet they are in it. God would seem that we know how He thinks. And the better we know how God thinks, the closer we come to Him. God had a liking to David.

And David had a great desire to live exactly according to the rules that God in his word (law) had given.

(Psalm 40:8 and 119:174
"I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."
(Psalms 40:8, NIV).
174 "I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight.").

I know that the law disciplinary master (teacher) was to Christ. We, in Christ, are no longer under the law. We are not justified by works of the law, but by the blood of Jesus and our faith in Him. The cross was and is the only trues that applies. But on the other hand, we have realize that the law has not been abolished. Until there will be a

new heaven and a new earth that law will still exist. Jesus even says:

Matthew 5:1

"Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Reason enough for us to dig even deeper into this topic.

To start this study logically we begin in the first book of the Bible and search for texts on Sunday or on Saturday (Sabbath).

The Sunday in the Old Testament is not mentioned, so we will read for now only on the Sabbath.

The first time that in fact is spoken in the Bible on the Sabbath, is in Genesis 2. We don't read the word Sabbath here, as such, but subsequent

parts of the Bible shows that this is the institution of the Sabbath.

Genesis 2:2-3

"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."

Is this seventh day, that day when God was first set up the day of rest, is that day after all these centuries, still to be appointed? Those first few thousand years of history are hardly known. Can it be that the seventh day in each of the year counts are no longer found? This is indeed possible! Who knows now what the seventh day is, the Sabbath?

God knew that later in history this could be a problem. He has solved this problem by appointing that day again as the Sabbath. This

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story is in Exodus 16. It is the first time that the word Sabbath is mentioned in the Bible.

Exodus 16:23 and 27

"He (Moses) said to them, "This is what the LORD commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. ... Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any."

verse 27: "Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none."

In that way God has, supernaturally, indicated that He sees that day as the seventh day. From history science and from the Jewish tradition it is proven that the seventh day in our era still falls on a Saturday.

The Sabbath is included in God's Law: the Ten Commandments. (Ex.20). But before that law, those Ten Commandments, were given by God to Moses, God spoke to Moses:

Exodus 16:29

"How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? 29 Bear in mind that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days."

The Sabbath rest was a commandment of God before He gave the Ten Commandments, that is the law. In Exodus 20 we read that God governed the Sabbath rest through the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:8-11

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

It is significant that this is the most comprehensive commandment is of the Ten Commandments. It seems that God anticipated that problems can be expected. Any excuse that people could find to escape this commandment was deprived by Him by the extent of this commandment. People are so smart, God seems to think, if I tell them that they must keep the sabbath, they will let work their son or daughter for them. Even just the servants. But God says, even the alien who lives in your cities should keep the Sabbath.

The why of that Sabbath sanctification describes God in this commandment. He says: keep this commandment because it points to the great work I did. And that great work, that creation, points with everything what is in it at its Creator. God wants the people think of Him in one day of the week in particular. Will be busy with His greatness. Will be busy with him. Therefore God hallowed that day. Not because God would be tired of creating He hallowed that day, but to give people a day in which they can be busy with Him in all (enforced) rest.

In carefully reading this commandment, we must notice that in first instance it is not God's intention that people would come to rest from their work, but God says that that day is a day that belongs to Him. When God gave this commandment He directed the attention of man not to the rest, but to Him. That day belongs to Him! We have in fact no control over it. It is His day.

After Exodus 20, the word Sabbath is no longer referred till in Chapter 31.

Exodus 31:12-17

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, 13 "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

14 "Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people.

15 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the

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LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.

16 The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. ”

This shows that the Sabbath is so important to God that He makes it for the children of Israel a matter of life or death:

"Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people."

It is also made clear that it is "a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy."

It is a "lasting covenant."

The last time, that in Exodus is spoken on the Sabbath is in Chapter 36.

Exodus 35:2

"...the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD."

Then we go to Leviticus.

Leviticus 19:1-3

"The LORD said to Moses,

"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

"Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 23:3

"There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD."

The land too has its Sabbath:

Leviticus 25:3

"For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards." verse 23

"....because the land is mine...."

The land is from God. Therefore it must comply with the commandment once every seven years to rest, a year long. We are also of God! Should we, in this context, not even ask ourselves what God thinks about us and our day of rest?

The next text that is on the Sabbath we read in: Leviticus 26

Leviticus 26:1.2

"Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God.

"Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD."

Both Leviticus 19:1 as in Leviticus 26:1 God first called one of the Ten Commandments: respect for father and mother and do not bow down for idols and to cut images. And both times God continues to call the Sabbath commandment. It seems, that He wants to make clear that you're not to hold just one, but also the other commandment (the Sabbath commandment). These commandments could be in one line. Numbers 15:32-36 makes it clear that even wood gathering is forbidden by the Sabbath commandment and that death penalty is on it. That is a very heavy penalty for, in our eyes, a light offense. There must be something behind it. I think in this context of the words of Paul as he wonders: Is it about oxen that God is concerned? In response to a text which he quoted from Deuteronomy 25:4.

Deuteronomy 5:7-21 reiterates the Ten Commandments. But verse 12-15, in which the Sabbath commandment is regulated, has an entry relating to the servants also need to rest:

Deuteronomy 5:7-21

"...as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

In many respects, Israel is a prefiguration for the church. Would this also be the case?

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We were, when we lived in the world (Egypt), servants of Satan. Now we are saved of that dominion, we must ask ourselves is the Lord asking the same to us as He did for Israel. Would He like it when we hold a day of rest in memory of slavery in our time?

Nehemiah speaks of God who descended on Mount Sinai

Nehemiah 9:13-14

"You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good."

Please note how the Sabbath is emphasized and that the Sabbath is held alongside the fair regulations, just and right laws and the good decrees and commands. The law is seen twice separately from the Sabbath commandment in these texts.

Nehemiah 10:31

Nehemiah makes it clear that "When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath"

Nehemiah noticed at a certain moment that the Sabbath is violated.

Nehemiah 13:17-22

" I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing--desecrating the Sabbath day? 't your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath."

Nehemiah clearly shows that the Sabbath desecration is the cause of the exile and the destruction of the city.

Sabbath keeping is nice, but it should not be combined with hands full of blood, angry acts or evil.

God says in Isaiah, among other things on the Sabbath:

Isaiah 1:13-14

"I cannot bear your evil assemblies"

More texts from Isaiah:

Isaiah 56:2

"Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it"

Isaiah 56:6-7

"And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant--these I will bring to my holy mountain"

It is in the sanctification of the Sabbath apparently not only about Israelites but **to all those who joined the Lord.**

Isaiah 58:13-14

God says: "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Both for the alien and the children of Israel applies enormous promises if the Sabbath is not desecrated.

According to Isaiah 66:22-23, the Sabbath will be kept as the new heaven and new earth there will be.

This is something to think about. 22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD,

Nehemiah clearly shows that the Sabbath desecration is the cause of the exile and the destruction of the city.

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“so will your name and descendants endure.
23 From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,” says the LORD.
(Isaiah 66:22-23, NIV).

Jeremiah 17:19-27

19 This is what the LORD said to me: “Go and stand at the gate of the people, through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem.
20 Say to them, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone living in Jerusalem who come through these gates.
21 This is what the LORD says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem.
22 Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers.
23 Yet they did not listen or pay attention; they were stiff-necked and would not listen or respond to discipline.
24 But if you are careful to obey me, declares the LORD, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it,
25 then kings who sit on David’s throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited for ever.’”
(Jeremiah 17:19-27, NIV).

God makes it again clear that, in this case Judah, may not carry a load on the sabbath day, but has to keep the Sabbath day holy. God promises blessings to those who fulfill this commandment and make punishment in prospect if it is not fulfilled.

Ezekiel 20:10-12

(the lesson of history).

" I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the desert.

11 I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them.

12 Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy.”

God makes a distinction between "decrees and laws" and "Sabbath".

In the verses 16,19,20 and 21, we see again and again that distinction.

This is an important point. If we think of the subject Sabbath - Sunday people quickly say: Is that not legalistic?

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We are at the end of the texts in the Old Testament about the Sabbath. On Sunday there is nothing to find in this context.

Next we will see what can be found in the new Testament on the Sabbath and Sunday.

On page 8, we discuss the reasons why Christians keep Sunday.

The SABBATH in the New Testament

The Sabbath, as it comes to us in the Old Testament, is a day that must be strictly maintained, on penalize of all kinds of disaster. Is the Sabbath in the New Testament also clearly defined, or gives the NT a different view? We will now study.

The Pharisees said to Jesus:

Matthew 12:1-8

"Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." (namely: pick some ears of corn).

Jesus says then: "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?"

4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread--which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests.

5 Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent?"

6 I tell you that one greater than the temple is here.

7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. "

Jesus gives the Pharisees a number of lessons. The disciples were hungry, just like David, says Jesus. David decided that it was better to eat the consecrated bread, which was forbidden to eat under the regulations, than to die of hunger. Jesus condemns this thinking not. Rather, he added:

Mark 2:27

"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

The priests desecrated the Sabbath in the temple, but were not convicted. That would of course also be crazy. They were dedicated by the One who also had instituted the Sabbath, to

do their work on the Sabbath. The temple was the house of God, where God was served. If serving God means that the Sabbath is violated, serving God is more important than keeping the Sabbath.

And then Jesus says: "one greater than the temple is here." Jesus is God. He was served in the temple. The temple was meant for that. He is therefore more than the temple. He is the Lord of everything, including the Sabbath. He has instituted the Sabbath. The commandment is never bigger than the commander.

The Pharisees condemned the disciples. They did not understand what it means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'

But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. (1 Samuel 15:22, NIV).

Jesus said before and quotes 1 Samuel 15:22, where the subject is: listen and obey is better than sacrifice. In Hosea we read this way of thinking of God too.

Hosea 6:6

"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.."

In Mark we can read this too:

Mark 12:33

"To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Love of God and neighbor are more important than strict rules. It is the spirit of the commandment.

In all of this Jesus is not neutralizing the Sabbath, but makes it clear that keeping the Sabbath does not make sense when not listening to God and obey Him.

On another occasion: the healing of a man on the Sabbath, Jesus said:

Love of God and neighbor are more important than strict rules. It is the spirit of the commandment.

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Matthew 12:10-14

"it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath"

Jesus himself kept the Sabbath. His followers did too. Even after His death.

Luke 23:56b

"But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."

In His speech on 'the last things' Jesus says about what will happen just before His return among other things:

Matthew 24:20

"Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath."

So just before His coming to earth, which will be after today, a group of people will flee for the abomination that causes desolation. Jesus calls on them to pray that this fleeing will not fall on a Sabbath. Why? Apparently because He assumes that the Sabbath commandment is still in force. Jesus speaks to people to whom He can say that they will be hated because of Him. So followers of Jesus, whether Jewish or not is not important. Being hated is because they identify themselves with Jesus' name.

Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath and He says:

John 5:1-18

"Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

As Lord of the Sabbath, He could give this command, which came over the Sabbath commandment. Moreover, the wearing of the mattress was the result of 'doing well'. And as Jesus had already shown it is fully authorized. When the Jews wanted to prosecute him nevertheless Jesus said:

"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

verse 19: "the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."

Among works Jesus understands in this case, 'to do good'. And as we have seen, this is allowed on the Sabbath. The Lord of the Sabbath has said..

In several places in Acts, the Sabbath referred to as the day when they came together to talk about biblical issues.

The only time that further talks on the Sabbath day is Colossians 2:16. This text doesn't need an extensive commentary, as well as Hebrews 4 where it talks about the Sabbath rest. Both texts are described below extensively as we examine nine reasons why Christians keep Sunday as the day of rest.

We have read a lot of texts on the Sabbath. It is time to consider the texts on the Sunday. Unfortunately which are not in the Bible. That is not surprising because our English word

"Saturday" is not there either.

However, it is the same day as the Sabbath. The day we call 'Sunday' is mentioned in the Bible as the 'first day'. So we go in search of texts which those words and which talks about our Sunday.

Matthew 28:1

"After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb."

It is time to consider the texts on the Sunday. Unfortunately .. which are not in the Bible.

Parallel texts in Mark, Luke and John:

Mark 16:2

"Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb"

Luke 24:1

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb."

John 20:1

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance."

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The remainder of this event, we read among others, in Mark 16, and because it is important to read this text as clearly as possible, we do so from the King James translation. That is often closer to the ground text than the NIV translation.

Mark 16:9 KJV

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene,"

Comma's are not in the original manuscript, and the word 'when' neither. The text could be translated as well as:

"So Jesus was risen. Early the first day of the week he appeared to Mary Magdalene:

On that same day of the week Jesus has shown himself to his disciples.

John 20:19

"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then there are two more texts on the first day of the week which are found in Acts and Corinthians.

Acts 20:7

"On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight."

1 Corinthians 16:2

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."

Now we can discuss all these texts, but it can be interesting to do that in a different way.

In a Bible with marginal notes I found a list of eight reasons why Christians celebrate Sunday, so the first day of the week. Let us examine that list. The texts we have read will all get a chance.

Research on eight grounds why Christians celebrate Sunday

1. The new covenant does not give a commandment to keep any special day as the "Day of the Lord."

One of the most important texts to prove this point is a text from Romans 14

Romans 14:5-6

"One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind."

Well, this seems a clear text. However, you always have to be careful to use a in itself clear text without involving the context.

These words were written to Christians.

But in what context were they written?

It is about: **Do not judge your brother and in this case especially with his thinking about food.**

verse 2

"One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables".

It is therefore the question: should a Christian be a vegetarian or not? The whole chapter 14 is about that. Which reason would Paul have to speak here suddenly on the Sabbath or Sunday? His subject is food!

verse 3

"The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does"

The subject is a certain form of fasting! (verse 4 is a parenthesis)

In verse 5 Paul continues:

"One man (who eats) considers one day (when he is fasting) more sacred than another; another man (who eats just vegetables) considers every day alike."

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And so he became a vegetarian. For the man who doesn't eat meat on a given day, that day is more sacred than the other days. But for the man who doesn't eat meat at all, all days are equal.

verse 5b

"Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind."

If one thinks that a certain day of fasting is right and the other thinks every day should be like that (ie no meat should be eaten), it doesn't matter to Paul. As long as the attitude of the person who is fasting is not one of indifference but one of conviction. It is about pleasing God in this particular attitude.

verse 6

"He who regards one day (for fasting) as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat (after the fasting), eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains (ie eats meat on every day), does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God."

It is quite clear that Paul is not talking about the Sabbath. And so this section of the Bible doesn't apply as an argument to keep the Sabbath nor to keep the Sunday as a day to the Lord.

2. As second important Bible part Colossians 2:14-17 is used.

Colossians 2:14-17

"having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day."

Let's have a good look at these verses.

We will only look to the issue of a so called abolishing of the sabbath. But we can't do that without looking to the context.

Verse 14 makes it clear that Jesus cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us. He took that away and nailed it to the cross.

Then in verse 16 Paul says: Therefore do not let anyone judge you.

Who were judging the new born Colossians?

(verse 18)

That were people who delights in false humility. People who's mind puffs them up with idle notions.

(verse 19)

People who lost connection with Jesus the Head of the body (the church).

(verse 21)

People who submit to rules like: Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!

(verse 22)

Rules which are based on human commands and teachings.

Where ever Paul came he had trouble with the Jews. Jews knew already a lot of the Thora, but they had other books too, like the Talmud. And the Talmud had so much rules like: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"

Rules which were not in the bible (Thora). Rules about how to celebrate New Moon and what not to do on the Sabbath.

These Jews were judging the Colossians because the Colossians didn't live according these rules. But Paul said: "do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day."

Is Paul telling these Colossians that the Sabbath is abolished? Or that they better ignore the people who were telling them you have to do this or that on the Sabbath day?

In verse 17 he makes it clear that those Talmud rules are not important at all. It is not about how you celebrate a religious festival or the Sabbath day, but that you understand that those festive days have a meaning. They are shadows of things that were to come.

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When you want to understand what the meaning is of the festive days read the bible study of [The Holy Days of the Lord](#).

We, Christians (should) keep those commandments. We don't have other gods before God. We don't have idols nor worship them. We don't misuse the name of the Lord our God. But we don't keep the Sabbath day holy (except a few). At the other hand we honor our father and mother. And we do not murder, commit adultery, steal and give false testimony. We do not covet our neighbors house or wife nor anything else from our neighbor.

So when we (try) to keep the commandments of God, nine of them, why do we exclude the fourth commandment?

It is not allowed to steal a little, or to murder just one person, so why is it permitted to change the holy day of the Lord to another day? Think about that and read the next verse where matthew quotes Jesus.

Matthew 5:17

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

It is good to ask ourselves the following questions:

- 🕒 Did the heavens and the earth disappear?
- 🕒 If not. Then why are God commandments abolished?
- 🕒 Should Jesus' words not taken seriously?

So when we (try) to keep the commandments of God, nine of them, why do we exclude the fourth commandment?

3. The third point is that the sabbath is not mentioned in the rules as to who defines Acts 16.

Acts 16:19-20

"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20 Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood."

Indeed, here is not said that the Sabbath should be kept. But not only that, all other nine commandments of the 'ten' are not mentioned. If therefore the absence of the specific Sabbath commandment should prove that the Sabbath commandment is no longer in force, then the absence of those other nine commandments proves that they are no longer in effect either.

Nothing is less true. These commandments are to us just as much valid as for the people of Israel. The main question in Acts 15 is not should the Sabbath be held or not, but: should Gentile-believers be circumcised or not.

The statement mentioned in paragraph three therefore doesn't hold .

4. The Sabbath has not to be kept anymore because real and eternal rest is in Christ. (Hebrews 4)

Actually this is not so much on the Sabbath day, but on the Sabbath rest in Hebrews 4.

Let us go over this for a moment.

Actually it begins in Hebrews 3:16 (from here please read in your own Bible, till 4:13).

The writer speaks here about the people of Israel that withdraw from Egypt. They have been forty years in the desert and the older generation died there. Their bodies lie in the desert.

Hebrews 3:18-19

"And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who

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disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.”

Where would Israel enter?

Here we read: into his rest.

We know from history, that after a few years desert journey the promised land was reached. Moses sent some men to explore the country, but the people believed the explorers more than God. God punished them by letting them wander a total of forty years in the wilderness until all who had been incredulous, had died.

(Numbers 14:34 34 For forty years--one year for each of the forty days you explored the land--you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’).

They could therefore not go into the promised land because of their disobedience. The "rest" where the writer of Hebrews is talking about, was for them: the promised land. Chapter 4 shows clearly, we still come back to that, that the 'rest' of the promised land, a prefiguration is, or even more a pre-fulfillment of the eternal rest in the eternal promised land. This is confirmed in Hebrews 11:9-10.

9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
(Hebrews 11:9-10).

We Christians have also to make a journey till we arrive in our promised country. For those who do not understand the following: Egypt is usually the image of the world. Like Israel turned his back to Egypt, so we must also turn away from the world. Israel went through the desert in a time of education and testing, so we go also after our conversion for a certain time our way through the desert.

Israel entered at a certain time into the promised land and began to possess the land by chasing away the inhabitants, -people that have been

very disobedient to God. Here we see a parallel. Us Christians should also be to that point of turn in the promised land. This promised land is for us the 'heavenly regions'.

In Ephesians 6:11 and 12

(11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.)

it is clear that we neither can enter this promised land. We also have a fight. A battle against spiritual forces and armies. These spiritual creatures were also extremely disobedient to God, just as the original inhabitants of Palestine.

But now comes an important point. All rather complicated, argument of Hebrews 4:1-13 is as follows, that God, long before there was a promised land (Palestine), another promised land had in mind. He had another kind of rest in his mind than the rest the people in Israel entered when they took possession of Palestine. It is even true that the rest we Christians already have, is a shadow -in fact more a pre-schadow- of the rest that awaits us when we enter the real rest.

We Christians have also to make a journey till we arrive in our promised country.

These are issues that still more can be said, but that is for now far beyond the issue that we are talking about.

We can clearly see from the previous things we discussed, that the rest presented here is a rest that is in excess of the rest that Israel got when they entered the promised land. And also exceeds the rest we now enjoy by living as spiritual people, which doesn't expect to get it from works of the law.

verse 9

"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God".

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This Sabbath rest has only in a symbolic way to do with the Sabbath commandment.

The word Sabbath means a break or stop work. The Sabbath rest, as mentioned here, has clearly to do with resting of your works (verse 10). What works? The works of the law! It has nothing to do with a possible abolition of the Sabbath commandment.

5. The Sabbath has been changed to Sunday because at that day the Lord rose from the dead.

Let us study this point, because if this point is right this may be evidence to Christians to keep that day as day of the Lord.

Luke says that Joseph of Arimatea laid Jesus' body in a rock tomb.

Luke 23:54

"It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin."

verse 56b

"But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."

Luke 24:1

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. "

verse 6

Two angels told them "He is not here; he has risen!".

verse 7b

"on the third day be raised again."

A number of specific points are mentioned here. (Out of the most important point of course: Jesus is raised! He is no longer in the grave!)

- a. it talks about a Sabbath
- b. and it talks about the first day of the week
- c. and it talks about "raised again on the third day."

First, let's examine what point c "the third day" means. These other issues are automatically

thereafter. In Mark 8:31 Jesus says: after three days. Let's assume that the term 'third day' can mean that Jesus raised on the third day. Then we get the following situation: We know that He died the day before the Sabbath. So then the Sabbath is the second day and Sunday the third. Then Jesus would therefore be raised on Sunday.

But Marcus is talking a few times about: "after three days". Again, Jesus died on the day before the sabbath, which would have been Friday afternoon. Saturday (or Sabbath) at afternoon is then the first day. Sunday afternoon is the second day and Monday afternoon the third day. We know with certainty that this is wrong because Mark tells us clearly that Jesus was no longer in the tomb on Sunday morning very early. (So that is, assuming the crucifixion was on Friday afternoon, at best one day and two nights.)

Should we assume that one apostle was wrong and the other right?

Should we assume that one apostle was wrong and the other right? Who speaks the redeeming word? Is it now 'the third day', or is it 'after three days? The Savior Himself, speaks this redeeming word. Jesus gives a very clear statement how long it would be.

Matthew 12:40

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

So Jesus would remain in the tomb for three days and three nights .

All these texts seem contradictory, because how can Jesus died on Friday and on Sunday He is no longer in the grave, as He himself said that He would remain three days and three nights in the grave?

Let's assume that Jesus raised on Sunday morning. Based on Jesus' statement, we will deduct three days and three nights from that Sunday morning. Sunday morning back to Saturday morning, the 1st day and 1st night. Saturday morning back to Friday morning is the 2nd day and the 2nd night. The third day

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(counted back) begins on Thursday morning. But it says that Jesus died at the end of the day and not early in the morning. Three nights and three days later, again at the end of the day and not early in the morning. The conclusion must therefore be: If Jesus died at the end of the day, He also raised at the end of the day (three days later). The Christians ought not to celebrate 'Good Friday', but "good Wednesday.

Or maybe not? Why does it seem that this is not right? Because the Christians celebrate 'Good Friday' because they read in Luke 23:54 that the following day it would be Sabbath. And when we talk about the Sabbath, then we talk about Saturday isn't it? Do we see an error in the Bible? Fortunately not! As we have seen so often in other bible studies the problem is solved when the surrounding parts of the Bible are involved. The whole story of Jesus' suffering and death begins with Luke in Chapter 22. The parallel sections in Matthew 26 and Mark 14 must of course also be compared.

Luke 22:1
"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching".

Matthew 26:17
"On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

Mark 14:12
"On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

These texts clearly show that the whole history of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection happening in the days of the feast of unleavened bread.

These texts clearly show that the whole history of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection happening in the days of the feast of unleavened bread.

Leviticus 23 describes this festival accurate. We have to understand that in Leviticus clearly is defined when the Passover should be kept and what then follows. The Passover must be held on the 14th day of the month Nisan, in the twilight. (Days like God has instituted goes from sunset to sunset, not like we are used to from midnight to midnight.) The 14th Nisan begins after sunset. The Passover to. The day of preparation (or, as Mark mentions in Mark 15:43: (that is, the day before the Sabbath) was to prepare the Passover. So that is Nisan 13th.

Luke 22:7 and 8

"Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.""

After the Passover is prepared, the following day, the 14th Nisan, begins at sunset. On that evening, or as it says in Luke 22:14 "When the hour came" the Passover was eaten. Jesus did that too. And after the "Evening" meal He went to Gethsemane. There He was captured and brought to the High-priest. On that day in which the Passover was eaten, He became the Lamb that was led to slaughter for us. In that night He was also denied by Peter, before a rooster had announced that the new day arrived. This new day was still the 14th Nisan. That same day, our Passover was slaughtered, and died around the ninth hour. (In our time frame around 1500 hours).

Why is this so important? What has that to do with the Sabbath?

When God set up the festival times, He had an intention. It takes now too much time to explore this in detail. But you can read about that in the bible study about the [Feasts of the Lord](#).

There is a lot of symbolism in these feasts, even for us Christians. Anyway, God has established that the day after Nisan 14th the feast of unleavened bread was to be celebrated. It is a day that "no servile work" may be performed. The 15th Nisan is a Sabbath. Regardless of what day that is. So again for clarity: the day after Passover is a always a Sabbath!

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So if we believe Jesus. Who said that He would be three days and three nights in the grave, we see that Jesus died Nisan 14th at noon at ± 1500 hours and that He was in the grave Nisan 15th and 16th and was resurrected on Nisan 17th before sunset. And that day it was Sabbath again. (Now the weekly Sabbath). And when the women went the next morning, very early to the tomb He indeed was risen.

All this shows that point 5 is not correct and that the Lord appointed the Sabbath as His day by being resurrected that day.

6. The sixth proposition which is why Christians often say the first day of the week, Sunday, is the 'day of the Lord' is because the first Christians also kept that day instead of the Sabbath. John 20 should prove that.

John 20:19

"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"!"

This text is not on whether the Sabbath was abolished. The disciples were there in all probability, even on Sabbath. They were constantly together. After Jesus' ascension they went also to the upper room "where they were staying." "They all joined together constantly in prayer".

Acts 1:15

" In those days ("where they were staying") Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said..."

Acts 2:1

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place."

From the above texts it clearly shows, that it is not one particular day that they came together, but that they were constantly together.

From the continuation of the story that is recorded in John 20 it is clear that neither the gathering together of the disciples on that first day of the week, nor the appearance of Jesus on that first day of the week has implications for changing the Sabbath to Sunday.

John 20:26 KJV

"On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight."

Paul traveled around. Wherever he came he held meetings. And one of those meetings was for the author of Acts

important because of the incident with Eutychus, who fell out the window. To indicate under what circumstances that happened the story begins with:

"On the first day of the week we came together....."

This says nothing about the relationship Sabbath / Sunday. At best, it shows that Paul was not only busy with speeches on the Sabbath

(as we shall see below), but also e.g. the first day of the week. Paul was also on other days than the first day of the week busy with discussions. In Acts 19 we read that

Acts 19:9b

"He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus." Paul went on the sabbath day at the synagogue as well.

(2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, Acts 17:2, NIV).

Now there are people who say that he was going to the synagogue to convince the Jews of Christ. That was his intention too. But it says that he went in the synagogue "As his custom was".

Acts 18:4

"Every Sabbath he (Paul) reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks."

Paul was also on other days than the first day of the week busy with discussions.

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(Acts 13:42-44)

Acts 13 shows too that "On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord."

So not only the Jews were gathered there on Sabbath.

The sixth claim is covered, with accompanying texts. It is not very strong and certainly no evidence that the Sabbath no longer has to be kept, or changed into Sunday.

7. Sunday is the 'Lord's Day', because at that day was John in the Spirit and saw what was written in Revelation.

The logic of this argument escapes me, because this proves nothing about the Sunday. This text shows moreover that that day was Sabbath. Why?

Matthew 12:8

"For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, so it is His day. So the day of the Lord is the Sabbath. But is the subject in the text of Revelations 1:10 on the Sabbath / Sunday? I believe that something else is meant by "Day of the Lord." Almost all of Revelations is about "the day of the Lord", and that's not the Sunday and not the Sabbath, but it is the day of his revenge. But also the day of the Kingdom of God here on earth. The millennial kingdom of peace which Jesus will rule from his throne in Jerusalem. It is the day which what happens is described in Revelation.

8. A final statement would prove that Sunday is the new "day of the Lord". To prove this the next verse is cited: 1 Corinthians 16:2 "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."

How one wants to use this text to designate the Sunday as "day of the Lord" is again not clear to me. The subject is: collection and set early aside a some of money for this purpose. It is not needed to do this on the 'day of the Lord'. Why says Paul that they have to do this on the first day of the week? The first day of the week was to the people of Israel traditionally the first work day. Paul says them to set aside a sum of money, in keeping with ones income, on the first day of the week, for the work of the Lord. It's about gifts. It's about the first fruits. From the revenues of the first day first fruits had to be set aside.

Proverbs 3:9

"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops."

Now we have examined all these points, it should be clear that there can't be found a valid reason in the Bible, to deviate from the day that God has set from the creation.

Let's have a look to the whole thing from another perspective.

1. When was the Sabbath instituted?
God instituted it, even before the Fall.
If this is an institution of God, which has nothing to do with sin, then we can not abandon it knowing to be cleansed from of our sin. It has nothing to do with sin!
2. When showed God clearly his people Israel how he thought about the Sabbath? Was that when the law was given? No, that was before the law was given by God to Moses.
In Ex.16 God showed supernatural what day of the week the Sabbath day was.
In Ex.20 this Sabbath commandment was incorporated in the law. Quite apart from the question: do we have to take into account the law, we find that the Sabbath commandment already existed before the law came. So it seems only logical to keep the Sabbath commandment whether it is in the law or not and regardless of whether the law still should be held.
3. In Ex.20 this commandment was included in the law, these are the ten commandments. Of

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these ten commandments 9 are held by Christians, at least trying it. Christians see these as the commandments of God for their lives. But the remarkable thing is that the fourth commandment, which regulates the Sabbath rest, is not be taken literally. One keeps the Sunday instead of Saturday, and then in a way which does not correspond with what God has commanded.

4. And finally, why should we abolish the Sabbath day as God himself thinks that this day is so important that He leaves that day survive, even after He created the new heaven and new earth.

Isaiah 66:22-23.

"from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD".

Both the people of Israel and the Sabbath will remain before God's face, as will the new heaven and new earth.

The Sabbath is a day that belongs to God. It is His day. It must be very weighty arguments to change the day of God into another day, as Christians have done. They have, without a direct command from God, changed the Saturday into Sunday.

Afterword

Keeping the Sabbath doesn't give us eternal life. That is only through faith in Jesus Christ and His completed work. But from our study on the Sabbath we can draw the conclusion that if we keep the Sabbath, as the commandment, we are pleasing God. And is this not reason enough for us to do what his word is telling us to do?

I try myself to keep those rules. I closed my business on Saturday. I use the Saturday to relax and also to do Bible study.

Unfortunately I found no church, where I feel comfortable, which comes together on Saturday. So I go to a church that comes together on Sunday.

God is looking to your heart.

I feel that the Father Heart of God welcomes those who wish to keep his word in what He has made clear.

When my sons were still at home and under my (our) authority, you could say: when they were still under the law, I taught them what is good for them. Now they are grown up (you can say, in Christ), I have no possibility to punish them if they do not respect my rules they learned, I don't even want that. But, what am I happy when I see that it goes well with them as they do stick to those rules which I have taught them. And I am a father who made mistakes in the upbringing. God makes no mistakes in our education. He has His reasons to show us His precepts, His commandments. And those are holy, just and good!
(Romans 7:12).