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# Ten Reasons to Keep the Sabbath Day Holy

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Scriptural quotations from The King James Version

## REASON 1. Genesis 2:2-3

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made".

The Earth had been created. Everything planned was done exactly as God wished, with specific purpose, size and shape. The Holy Scriptures say that after completing the Creation, God rested from everything He had made.

In this context, *rest* does not mean that God was tired; the Hebrew word *Shābat* means stop working because the job is finished, not because of tiredness. After finishing His work, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because in it He had rested from all his work, as Genesis 2:3 declares. From that time the sanctity of the seventh day has not changed, because God does not change. As James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*". If James' words are acceptable, then it must also be accepted that God has never removed the sanctity of the Sabbath. Moreover, James' words are strongly supported by God who by Malachi declares "For I am the LORD, *I change not...*". (Italic is a way of emphasis). Since God never changes, the Sabbath rest continues.

## Reason 2 . Exodus 20: 8

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy".

No other but the fourth commandment (Exodus 20: 8) begins with the word "remember". God rested on the seventh day so he could remind rest too. He sanctified the Sabbath, so he could remind us to keep it holy.

There is no record in the Bible that says while living in slavery Israel was able to keep the Sabbath. Slavery means Israel obeyed Pharaoh's will. But after the captivity they began to keep it. Exodus 16:23 reports: "And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow 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".

The way in which the statement is made strongly suggests that Israel knew about the sanctity of the Sabbath. Moreover, there are no records about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob keeping the Sabbath. However, the absence of a specific verse in no way means that they did not observe it. God testifies twice about Abraham's fidelity, saying:

"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my

charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws". Genesis 26:5.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him". Genesis 18:19.

These two verses testify that Abraham and his descendants kept God's commandments, statutes and laws before Israel became a nation. This means that the Sabbath was kept by the patriarchs with no interruption.

Thus it is demonstrated that the Israel's patriarchs knew about commandments including the resting on the Sabbath day.

## REASON 3. Matthew 24:20

"But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day".

There are occasional arguments claiming that the Sabbath ended when Christ was crucified. It is said that from that time on Christ annulled the Sabbath. However, there is no evidence in the apostolic writings to support that claim. On the contrary, Matthew 24:20 shows that the Sabbath continued to be observed by the disciples even after the death of Christ. His crucifixion occurred in the year 30 A.D. In the year 70 A.D., the destruction of Jerusalem came - that is forty years later. If the Sabbath observance was to end in the crucifixion, what could be the reason for praying that fleeing from Jerusalem did not happen on that day?

The Sabbath law does not forbid to flee or walk any distance. The elders' tradition established the so called "sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12). It is very critical to understand that the words of Jesus are related to worshipping God; His disciples knew the content of Isaiah 58: 13-14a.: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD". That is why the Lord Jesus recommended they pray not to flee on Sabbath, as this is the day to worship God, whose worship in that day still continues.

## Reason 4. Sabbath observance continues

"And there will be no command to remain idle for one day of rest, to him who perpetually keeps sabbath" (St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon. The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching. p. 94. Christian Classics Ethereal Library).

Irenaeus 1 (circa 30-202 C.E.), was bishop of Lyon, France. Some of his writings were devoted to combating the Gnostic heresy. In his book "The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching," he says that for those who keep the Sabbath it is unnecessary to order them to keep it. This clearly shows that although the Church was actively promoting the observance of the first day of the week, the Sabbath day was observed by the second century A.D.

"In the New Law the observance of the Lord's day took the place of the observance of the Sabbath, not by virtue of the precept but by the institution of the Church and the custom of Christian people" (Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Summa Theologica. On the precepts of justice. Article 4. Reply to Objection 4).

This high profile Catholic theologian declared in this statement who instituted Sunday instead Sabbath. Thomas Aquinas lived centuries before the Protestant Reformation, and without hesitation declares that changing the Sabbath observance to Sunday observance was made neither by God nor by Christ, but by the authority of the Catholic Church. He said the change was made "by the institution of the Church and the custom of Christian people". Who were those Christian people? It should be understood they were members of congregations where bishops and priests were worshipers of the sun day even long before their conversion to Christianity.

Interestingly, Thomas Aquinas was not the only one who declares the power of the Catholic Church in religious matters; other high-profile theologians claim the same.

Monsignor Louis Segur, Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today, p. 213 [L.G. Segur (1820-1881), a French prelate, later was appointed as a diplomatic and judicial official in Rome] said: "It is worthwhile to remember that this observance of Sunday - in which after all, the only Protestant worship consists, not only has no foundation in the Bible, but it is in flagrant contradiction with its letter, which commands rest on the Sabbath, which is Saturday. It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to the Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic Church]". (The Sabbath. Google Books).

#### Reason 5. Sabbath is the seventh day (Matthew 28:1)

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre".

It is argued that the Christian Sabbath is the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday. That argument is a matter of manipulation; it is true that in the Hebrew language Sabbath means rest; however, God applied that name to the seventh day of the week (Genesis 2:3), and no man has authority to declare holy any other day of the week.

Matthew 28: 1 invalidates any human decision to apply the term Sabbath to the first day of the week. Moreover, in the Bible only the seventh day of the week bears that name; the first day of the week is called first (after) Sabbath, or *miam sabbaton* as in the Greek New Testament. Therefore, rest, or Sabbath, is a unique name given by God on the seventh day of the week; Genesis 2: 3 shows it and Matthew 28: 1 confirmed it.

No other day is holy but Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

#### Reason 6. Colossians 2:16

"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".

This text is used to assert that after Christ's death, Sabbath day lost all value. The question is: Does apostle Paul say that the seventh day of the week lost its blessedness given by God in Genesis 2 :3? Of course not; in order to understand his words it is necessary to be familiar with the solemnities God gave to Israel.

An interesting point in Colossians 2:16, to know the truth, is the mention of "sabbath days" (plural) rather than sabbath day (singular). Paying attention to this difference leads to understand that Paul is not saying that resting on the seventh day of the week fell obsolete. Sabbath day is different than those festive sabbaths celebrated once a year by Israel mentioned in the Law. Let's see them:

Passover (Leviticus 23:5), Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6-8), First Fruits (Leviticus 23:9-16), Pentecost (Leviticus 23:23-25), Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27-32), Booths (Leviticus 23:34-43). Sabbatical Year (Leviticus 25:2-7), Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-16).

The first and last day of Unleavened Bread were sabbaths; the last day of Pentecost was sabbath; the Feast of Trumpets was sabbath; the Day of Atonement was sabbath, the first and last days of the Feast of Booths were sabbaths, or holy days; .

These are the sabbath days Paul is talking about. A careful reading leads to understand that Colossians 2:16 has exactly the same meaning than Galatians 4:10 "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years".

When the seventh day was sanctified by God (Genesis 2:3), no rites or holocausts were added to it; but were added when the Sinaitic covenant between God and Israel was made, as Numbers 28:9-10 shows: "And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering".

The sacrifices and burnt offerings ended with the death of Christ, but that does not mean that the Sabbath sanctification finished. Colossians 2:14 says: "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". This *handwriting of ordinances* is not a reference to the two tables of stone written by God but to the book written by Moses where those ordinances are listed. Therefore, Colossians 2:16 is not a reference against to the Sabbath observance.

#### Reason 7. Luke 23:56

"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment."

Luke is telling what happened after the Lord's body was laid in the tomb. Those women returned home and rested the Sabbath according to the fourth commandment (Exodus 20: 8-11).

For three and a half years Christ's disciples (men and women) were taught about the correct understanding of the Scriptures. They were never taught that after the crucifixion the Sabbath observance would finish. Thus, they went back home and rested the Sabbath according to the fourth commandment.

Those women knew that the Sabbath observance continued uninterrupted even after the crucifixion. Denying this truth is just assumption (i. e. a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof)

#### REASON 8. Mark 2:23-27

"And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."

Two things must be understood. First, God's law does not prohibit a person finding food to eat, as in the case of David and his men to whom Abiathar allowed to eat the consecrated bread that only the priest was allowed to eat. Second, Jewish tradition had imposed many laws God never commanded. Thus Christ obeyed the law and rejected Jewish tradition. In Mark 2: 23-27 Christ overturned the tradition, not the Sabbath.

Interestingly, many Christians support the Pharisee position, claiming Jesus transgressed the law; however, a careful analysis concludes the Pharisees were the real transgressors, and Jesus applied the law correctly. Supporting the Pharisees is a dangerous blasphemy against Jesus. In Matthew 5:17 He declared: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill". Were the Pharisees right when they accused the Lord of being lawbreaker? Certainly not.

The Lord Jesus clearly says that the Sabbath was made for men in general since His words exclude races; He does not say that the Sabbath was made for the Jewish people, but for men—either Jews or gentiles. No verse in the New Testament says that the Sabbath belongs to the Jews. The Lord said it was made for men. Moreover, Adam and Eve did not belong to any race; they were just two people. Therefore, it is correct to understand that the Lord's words in Mark 2:27 are a reference to all mankind. Sabbath was made (not for the Jews) but for mankind.

#### Reason 9. Romans 14:5-6

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks".

Some people think that Paul, in this text, frees Christians in Rome to rest a day according their preferences—either Sabbath or Sunday; thus whatever their preferences, everyone should feel comfortable with their decision taken. Paul says, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind".

Thinking this way suggests anarchy was dominant in the church, as each person was allowed to rest their preferred day. Understanding the text that way is wrong because the main issue Paul is talking about is disregarded.

The key to understanding what Paul is talking about is found in verse 6: "He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord; and he that regards not the day, to the Lord he does not regard it. *He that eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he that eats not, to the Lord he eats not, and gives God thanks*". (Italics used by way of emphasis). Two themes are linked: *days* and *eat*.

Here is what happened: Traditionally, the Jews used to fast twice a week; it is not known which specific days were those. "Luke 18:12 says: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.". In Romans 14:6 Paul talks about fasting in specific days.

Please, pay attention: He that regardeth the day (for fasting), regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day (for fasting), to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth (not fasting), eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not (not fasting), to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks". Notice how in the same verse 6 Paul links "days" and "food"

This is why in Romans 14: 5 he says: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Therefore, Sabbath or Sunday observance is not the issue Paul is talking about. He talks about fasting days.

#### Reason 10 Revelation 1:10

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,"

The majority of Christians believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day. Even the Aramaic Bible in Plain English completely distorts the Greek text of the New Testament and freely writes: "And I was in The Spirit on the first day of the week...". The Greek words *Kuriakē hemera* in Revelation 1:10, just means Lord's day, not Lord of the first day of the week. Readers mentally add a meaning the Bible text does not suggest.

Distorting the Bible, using eisegesis, to reach a desired conclusion is unfortunate. Which is the real Lord's day? Mark 2:28: clearly says: "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.". Christ is not Lord of the first day of the week. Moreover, arguing that He was the Lord of the sabbath before the crucifixion, but became Lord of the first day of the week after His resurrection is eisegesis, i.e., "Eisegesis is the process of interpreting a text or portion of text in such a way that the process introduce one's own presuppositions, agendas or biases into and onto the text".

CONCLUSION We have commented on several Bible verses in which the Sabbath (today known as Saturday) is mentioned as the day of weekly rest. If the reader considers these comments useful, the invitation is to think about the best alternative to glorify God obeying His will. AMEN.