

From: Neil Uher II
Date: August 4, 2013
Subject: The Sabbath, Chapter 1
Transcribed by: J.R.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11 (NKJV)

This is the fourth commandment, and out of the ten it's probably the most misunderstood. It is my prayer that God will bless this letter and direct His people to worship Him in spirit and in truth, and grow in His grace and love.

I. What is the Sabbath?

Sabbath is a transliteration¹ of the Hebrew word, Shabbat and means to rest, cease, or stop. Shabbat is a day when no work is to be done, “In it you shall do no work...” (Exodus 20:10)

II. Who is Shabbat for?

*Shabbat is not just for “the Jews” as commonly taught. God made Shabbat—a day of rest—as a gift for all mankind (see **Mark 2:27**); however as with the rest of God's commandments, only God's people who trust in Him and delight themselves in His commandments desire to obey, which they do. As it would be ridiculous to suggest that the sixth commandment, “**You shall not murder**” (**Exodus 20:13**) is only for “the Jews”, so is suggesting that the fourth commandment, the Shabbat, is only for “the Jews”, also ridiculous. Why? Because all 10 commandments apply to all of God's people, Jews and Gentiles. God requires Christians to obey all ten of His laws, not just nine of them; and sadly, some teach that you don't need to obey any of them!*

III. Did Jesus Keep the Sabbath?

*Absolutely. In fact, if Jesus did NOT keep the Sabbath (Shabbat), He would have broken one of God's commandments, which is sin! Therefore Jesus definitely kept Shabbat because He is our High Priest who “**was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**” (**Hebrews 4:15**). Carefully consider the following two verses:*

“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him (Jesus), because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” John 5:18

¹ Transliteration-“To represent (letters or words) in the corresponding characters of another alphabet.” A.H.C.D. For example, “sh” is a transliteration of the Hebrew letter (shin)

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“Therefore some of the Pharisees said, ‘This Man (Jesus) is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.’ Others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?’ And there was a division among them.” John 19:16

Jesus never broke the Sabbath; rather, what He broke were the traditions of the Jews and Pharisees. In both passages, the only thing Jesus did that upset the Jews and Pharisees was to heal someone on Sabbath. Actually, Jesus did many things that infuriated the Jews and Pharisees; not only did He trample upon their man-made traditions, but notice that He also made Himself “equal with God”, and that by His “signs”, others suggested that He cannot be a “sinner”!

IV. Traditions

The word ‘tradition’ comes from the Latin word, ‘tradere’ meaning ‘to hand over, deliver, entrust’; thus a tradition is, ‘the passing down of elements (e.g. teachings) of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication.’ (The American Heritage College Dictionary)

The scribes and Pharisees had developed a complex system of traditions, many of which became what is known as ‘fences’ around God’s commandments. For example, the third commandment says,

“You shall not take the name YHVH² your God in vain, for YHVH will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7

God’s intention for this commandment wasn’t to forbid His people from speaking His name, but to prevent them from swearing falsely and using His name casually (or worse). This is why our Lord Jesus (Hebrew; Yeshua) in the prayer said, “Our Father, hallowed be Your name,” (Matthew 6:9)

However the scribes and Pharisees developed a tradition to forbid people from speaking God’s name—ever! To prevent people from taking God’s name in vain, they forbid them to say it at all;³ and through this “fence” they kept people from one of God’s commandments. When the scribes and Pharisees asked Yeshua why He and His disciples didn’t keep the “tradition of the elders” (i.e. washing of the hands), He told them.

² The letters “YHVH” are a transliteration of the Hebrew letters yod (י), hey (ה), vav (ו), hey (ה); The personal name of God, usually translated “LORD” or “GOD” (all capitals) in the KJV and NKJV Bibles. I will teach on this subject separately at a later time-God willing.

³ A book called “The Mishnah” is considered the “oral law of Judaism and was recorded from about 200 B.C. to 200A.D. In it is written, “And these are they that have no share in the world to come...also he that pronounces the Name with its proper letters.” Our Lord Yeshua did not honor this tradition, (see John 17:26)

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“Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?...Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.” (Matthew 15:3,6)

It was these kinds of traditions our Lord Yeshua broke, but He never broke any of the commandments of God.

V. What Day of the Week is Shabbat?

Saturday—from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset is Shabbat. Now if you're like me, you probably thought the “Sabbath” was Sunday but that is wrong. Now I know this may come as a shock to you—as it was to me—but please be patient and continue to learn the truth about this very special day. Maybe you yourself have thought about this before but it was explained away and so you just kept on thinking the Sabbath was Sunday. After all, Christians everywhere honor Sunday as the Sabbath, they can't all be wrong...can they?

*WARNING: Only after studying this issue very carefully has the Lord convinced me of this truth; but before that, I have honored Sunday as the Sabbath all my Christian life. I throw this caution out there showing my own error too. Please take careful notice that I am not saying “they” are wrong; rather, I am saying “we” are wrong—all of us as Christians we are all guilty, myself included. Therefore I am not pointing fingers, or saying this or that group isn't saved—that's God's business. I just want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and to teach the truth. Let everyone who reads this message judge for themselves as being accountable to God and Yeshua (cf. **Romans 14:10**)*

What I have in front of me is one typical defense of why Sunday is the Sabbath. What I am going to do is quote directly from it and from the fourth commandment and I want you—as the Spirit enables you –to find what is wrong. First, from the Bible

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of YHVH your God...” Exodus 20:8-10

Now I'll quote from a book that gives a typical defense to the Sunday Sabbath doctrine. Commenting on the verses above they write ('proving' Saturday is not the Sabbath)

“If you read these verses carefully, you might be surprised to find that there is no mention of the day of the week upon which the Sabbath should be kept” Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation; The Gospel Trumpet No. 16 Rev. David Lipsy.

As you compare the two, do you see the error in this defense? Before you turn the page spend a little time with this for yourself.

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*If you didn't understand what was wrong, don't feel bad. What's 'obvious' to one person isn't 'obvious' to another. My problem with that defense is that he says, "...there is no mention of the day of the week upon which the Sabbath should be kept", which is absolutely wrong. The commandment clearly says, **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of YHVH your God..."***

*The Bible does not say "keep one of seven days as a Sabbath" but **"the seventh day is the Sabbath."** Sunday is not the seventh day, Saturday is the seventh day of the week. Moreover, the author goes on to "prove" how the New Testament specifically says that the first day of the week is the Sabbath; which it does not—but before we get to that, consider this: If we don't know that the seventh day is Saturday—as this author suggests—how does he know that the first day is Sunday??*

There were no names for the days of the week when the Bible was written; Saturday, Sunday, Monday, etc. came much later. The days of the week were referred to by first, second, third, etc. Except one, the seventh day of the week was the only day of the week with its only name, "Sabbath" or "Shabbat".

*Beloved ones of God, I am going to conclude this chapter of the Sabbath here. We have only scratched the surface, there is much, much more. In future studies, God willing, I will examine some verses that are commonly used to support the Sunday Sabbath (e.g. **Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10; Matthew 28:1; Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:6**; etc). Before I go, I want to quote from the Word of God one more time; God's Shabbat (Sabbath) is on the seventh day of the week (Saturday) and this has never been changed by God.*

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of YHVH your God. In it you shall do no work; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days YHVH made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore YHVH blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." Exodus 20:8-11

*Your servant for Yeshua's sake,
Neil*