

From: Neil Uher II
Date: August 17, 2013
Subject: The Sabbath, Chapter 2
Transcribed by: J.R.

“Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.” Isaiah 56:2 (NKJV)

These are God’s instructions to the nations (Gentiles) and He lets us know that the blessed man, is the one who doesn’t defile His Sabbath.

*In the last chapter, we looked at the fourth commandment where the Scriptures clearly say, **“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 YeHoVaH your God...” (Exodus 20:8-10)***

*Not the sixth day, not the first day; but the seventh day **“is the Sabbath of YeHoVaH your God”**. Although some people think the Sabbath was done away completely with the “ceremonial law”, most Christians believe that we are to still observe the Sabbath, most are just unsure of which day. On the other hand, there are quite a few who are very sure the Sabbath is Sunday (I used to be one of them), yet no matter how hard they thump their chests, there simply isn’t a verse that supports the tradition of changing the seventh day Sabbath to the first day.*

In this chapter, I would like to go through some verses that are commonly used to support a “Sunday Sabbath” doctrine, and in a future chapter, God willing, provide some practical instructions from the Bible on just how God desires us to keep His Holy day...holy.

I. A Little Mining

Two paragraphs ago I wrote, “...there simply isn’t a verse that supports the tradition of changing the seventh day Sabbath to the first day.” Please note the word “tradition”; I mentioned it in the last chapter and if you’re wondering why I’m using it again, let me tell you why...if Jesus and the Apostles didn’t change the Sabbath day, then who did? If you dig deep enough, you’ll find the answer to that question, the Roman Catholic church. Here are two quotes from the Catholic Church and note their boasting of how even the protestants have followed their lead.

“But since Saturday, not Sunday, is specified in the Bible, isn’t it curious that non-Catholics who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible, and not the Church (i.e. Catholic), observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Yes of course, it is inconsistent, but this change was made about 15 centuries before Protestantism was born, and by that time the custom was universally observed. They have continued the custom, even though it rests upon the authority of the Catholic Church and not upon an explicit text in the Bible.” Dr. John O’ Brien, Faith of Millions pp. 543-544

That’s a pretty bold statement, don’t you think? And yet, I must confess, he’s right! The whole purpose of the Reformation was to protest disapproval of the teachings of the Catholic Church and stick to the Bible alone. Well, if we stick to the Bible alone, how can we justify observing the Sabbath on the first day of the week when the Bible says to do so on the seventh day of the week?! Here’s one more quote by a Cardinal of the Catholic Church.

“You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify.” James Cardinal Gibbons, Faith of our Fathers 88th ed., p. 89

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While these quotes don't prove that Saturday is the Sabbath, I think they highlight a very important issue for the Christian church of our day; these quotes should definitely get us thinking about this issue and even challenge us to prove them wrong or right.

Upon finding all this out I started digging deeper for some answers. Now please don't misunderstand me. I am not discarding what the Reformers did (e.g. Luther, Calvin, etc.) I believe God used them all in a mighty way and they suffered many things, many terrible things, for the Gospel's sake; but I wondered, "What did they teach about the Sabbath? How did they justify observing the Sabbath on the first day instead of the seventh day of the week?"

I checked my copy of the Westminster Shorter Catechism which was written by the Puritans, and on page 26 under question #58, "What is required in the fourth commandment? "Here was their answer..."

A: "The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as He hath appointed in His Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to Himself. (Leviticus 19:30)"

*Again, please note their language of "expressly one whole day is seven", but the Bible says, **"the seventh day is the Sabbath..."** (Ex. 20:10) There's a big difference between the two. If my employer at work says I can take off "one day in seven" he has given me the option to choose which day best suits me to take off from work; maybe Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, whatever; only whichever day I choose, it could only be one (not Monday and Tuesday). However, if my employer says, "Neil, you're off the seventh day of this week." I no longer have the option to choose my off-day, my employer chose it for me-and if I decide to change it to the first day, I am liable to get fired!*

*Well beloved one, God has not given us the option of choosing when to observe His Sabbath, He didn't tell us, "one of seven," but **"the seventh day is the Sabbath."** By directing us all to observe the same day of rest, we (i.e. Believing Gentiles) and the Messianic children of Israel, become a physical sign which points to our spiritual covenant with our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.*

"And YeHoVaH spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying; Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am YeHoVaH who sanctifies you. You shall deep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest holy to YeHoVaH. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days YeHoVaH made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." (Exodus 31:12-17 (compared with Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 5:16; Romans11:17)

II. Not Son-Day but Sunday

Not long after the death of the Apostles, history reveals that there was a big drift away from, "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3) There were battles for ruler ship of the church, massive killings for the sake of "Christianity" (really for their own pride and agenda) and extreme hatred toward Jewish people.

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Although some evidence shows Christians observed Sunday as the Sabbath (after the Apostles, because the Apostles all observed the seventh day, "Saturday") Sunday was "officially" declared the Sabbath in the year 321 AD by the Roman Consul/Emperor Constantine. Under Constantine, the church and state were made one as the Roman Catholic Church. Constantine was a self-confessed sun-worshipper and believe it or not, there was a weekly ritual of sun-worshippers gathering together at dawn to see the sun rising, they actually worshipped the sun as a god. Ever since Constantine's Sunday Sabbath declaration in 321 AD (some sources say a little later), the Catholic Church has observed Sunday as the Sabbath, and this error continues even until today-not only in the Catholic Church, but in most Protestant churches too.

III. Smashing High Places-Trashing Traditions

"Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he (Josiah) broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image." 2 Kings 23:15

*King Josiah could have just went with the flow, he could have just indulged in the false god worship like everyone else, but he chose to obey God instead. Imagine that for a minute beloved one, all the nation was observing false methods of worshipping God, but he took a step back, sought God, and SMASHED all those high places! Look at all the Kings before him, over and over again we read about other Kings, **"the high places were not taken away"** (2 Kings 12:3 KJV, see also 14:4, 15:4, 21:3; etc.), sure it's easy to see their high places, but what about our own high places? Somebody would begin a certain ritual at a high place and it would just remain generation after generation, along with whatever wrong ritual went along with it. Everybody just kept doing it, "Well we have been doing it for so long..., our fathers did it, their fathers did it, their fathers did it..." The Reformers didn't take that complacent attitude and neither should we. What they began, we must complete, one high place at a time.*

"O YeHoVaH, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, 'surely our fathers have inherited lies, worthless and unprofitable things.'" Jeremiah 16:19

IV. According to the what?

"And the women who had come with Him (Jesus) from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment." Luke 23:55-56

*These women witnessed what our Lord went through, He was beaten, humiliated, crucified, died, and buried; yet we see that they still observed the Sabbath (i.e. on the seventh day) "according to the commandment". What commandment? The fourth! **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of YeHoVaH your God. In it you shall do no work..."** (Exodus 20:8-10). In case anyone should argue some difference between the 'Old Testament' and the 'New Testament', please keep in mind that these women kept the seventh day Sabbath even after, **"the veil of the temple was torn in two."** (Luke 23:45), so why should we think there was a change from the seventh day to the first day, for the Sabbath? Whatever believers did in accordance to the law of God, are we not to do the same? If these women kept the seventh day Sabbath, shouldn't we also keep the Sabbath on the seventh day?*

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Not only did these women keep the seventh day Sabbath, so did Jesus (Luke 4:16) and all His disciples (Acts 13:14, 27, 42, 44, 15:21; 17:2; 18:4; etc); why should we think to do any differently?

Q. "But don't some cults observe the Sabbath on the seventh day?"

*A. Yes. Some cults believe Jesus is God. Should that stop me from believing Jesus is God? Of course not, such arguments are only a distraction, the bottom line is, the Bible says, "**the seventh day is the Sabbath**", and that is all that should concern us. Even the most corrupt religions of the world are likely to have something right but that doesn't make the rest right.*

Beloved ones, I hope you are encouraged by these studies; I know it's never a pleasant experience to discover something is wrong with what we have been doing for awhile. But I just want to encourage you to search the Scriptures for yourself and let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. The fact is, all of us are like children and we grab onto the first thing we see, but as we learn and grow, we challenge what we have been holding onto, and the same thing is true concerning Bible doctrines. We are continually growing and learning, and that's a good thing! As for me personally, I thank God for His correction and I have been greatly blessed by observing the Sabbath the way God intended, and I'm confident He will do the same for you.

"Teach me, O YeHoVaH, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed. I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it." Psalm 119:33-35

*Your servant for Yeshua's sake,
Neil*