

SUNDAY

And  
The  
Fourth

COMMANDMENT

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## Introduction

The relationship of the Law to God and to men has long been a subject of heated debate. Likewise, the relationship of Sunday to the fourth commandment has also been a topic of heated debate. Both are interrelated with each other and both must be addressed.

In this book many questions concerning the Law will be addressed. For example, how does the law of God relate to the moral nature of God? Are the Ten Commandments restricted to the old covenant administration? Is there a universal moral standard for righteousness? What is the purpose of God's Law?

Is there a difference between the public administration of the covenants by men through public institutions versus the personal and direct administration of covenant salvation to men by God? When Paul speaks of the "works of the law" is he referring to embracing the Jewish faith or simply the ultimate revealed standard by which personal efforts to be justified before God are measured?

Is there evidence that the Sabbath law preceded the giving of the old covenant to Israel? How should the fourth commandment be interpreted? What relationship does the fourth commandment have with the "first day of the week" if any?

Has the fourth commandment been abolished or replaced under the "new" covenant? Has the fourth commandment been fulfilled by spiritual rest in Christ? If so, how has it been fulfilled? If not, why not? Is there such a thing as the Christian Sabbath? If so, how is it to be observed? Was Sunday worship originated by the law of Emperor Constantine? Did it precede Constantine?

These questions and many more are addressed in this book, and the author attempts to provide reasonable, Biblical, and historical answers.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Understanding the Law of God*

What is “the law” of God? Is it something unrelated to the moral nature of God? Is it merely an external and arbitrary rule imposed by God upon His creatures? Is it simply the revealed will of God?

#### **What is The Law of God?**

The precise words “*the law of God*” or the “*law of the Lord*” are found only twenty-eight times in Scripture (KJV). The expression “*the law of God*” is found four times in the Old Testament (Josh. 24:26; Nehemiah 8:8, 18; 10:28) and three times in the New Testament. (Rom. 7:22,25; 8:7).

The first instance (Josh. 24:26) refers to the writings of Moses including whatever Joshua wrote, the total writings being called “*the law of God.*” Hence, this usage refers to the total available scriptures which claim to be the written revelation from God up to that point.

The next three instances are found in Nehemiah and refer to the total available scriptures up to that point (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel; 1 & 2 Kings, etc.). Therefore, in the Old Testament Scriptures, “*the Law of God*” refers to the available “scriptures” or written revelation from God.

What about its use in the New Testament scriptures? In Romans 7:22,25 and 8:7 it seems to refer to the available word of God written up to that point (Genesis thru Malachi). So the expression “*The Law of God*” can be safely assumed to refer to the written revelation from God – the scriptures.

The other phase “*the law of the Lord*” is found twenty-one times in the Bible (KJV). It is found seventeen times in the Old Testament and four times in the New Testament. Again it seems to be used to refer to the whole of written scripture and particularly all the commandments contained in scripture (Psa. 1:2; 19:7; etc.). Hence, “the Law of God” and “the Law of the Lord” together seem to include all of written revelation with specific emphasis upon the total commandments of God.

However, the shorter phrase “*the Law*” is used a number of ways in scripture. It can refer to the complete writings of Moses, “*the book of Moses*” (Mk. 12:26) or “*the law of Moses*” (Lk. 2:22) or as in “*Moses and the prophets*” (Lk. 16:29), or “*the law and the prophets*” (Mt. 22:14). Here again, it seems to refer to the totality of Scripture. However, it can refer specifically to the Ten Commandments (Mt. 7:12; James 2:10-11; Rom. 7:7; etc.). It can also be used as an expression of the Ten Commandments as the moral basis for the ceremonial and civil laws given to Israel. Thus, it can refer to the whole Old Covenant system of Mosaic Law.

In addition, it can also be used to describe a specific law of God as in “*the law of the burnt offering*” or simply all the commandments of God wherever they may be found in the Scriptures (Psa. 119; Rom. 2:11-13) as the revealed will of God.

It can refer to the legal process in the court of law (Mt. 5:40). It can also be used in a basic sense to mean a “principle” by which something operates or functions (law of gravity) as in “the law of works.....law of.....faith” – Rom. 3:27.

However, in all the above, “the law of God” is ultimately the revelation of God and His will. As such, the scriptures manifest God’s own righteous, holy and moral nature, and provide the final moral basis by which His kingdom is governed and creatures will be finally judged.



## The Law Reveals the Heart of God

*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets – Rom. 3:21*

We learn from this statement that the Law of God is designed to reveal “*the righteousness of God*” in written form. Paul argues that in addition to His righteousness being revealed in the written moral Law, it is also “manifested” without or apart from the written Law. This additional manifestation of righteousness is witnessed by the law and the prophets, as manifested in the Person and life of Jesus Christ.

*But now the righteousness of God **without** the law is **manifested**, being **witnessed by** the law and the prophets;*

*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ....- Rom. 3:21-22*

*To him give all the prophets witness....- Acts 10:43*

Jesus could claim “*I am the truth*” (Jn. 14:6) equally as He could claim “*Thy Word is truth*” (Jn. 17:17).

As one reads the *written* revelation, the righteousness of God is revealed by direct statements about His nature, and through His moral precepts and principles. In addition, as one beholds the *living incarnated* form of God (Jesus), the moral character of God is spelled out in his attitudes, words and actions. In the former revelation it is revealed by “*the letter*” whereas in the latter it is revealed “*in the Spirit*” guided life of Christ.

Significantly, the written form, or the scriptures is given by “inspiration” of God. Nothing better expresses the direct connection between God’s Being and the written word of God than the term “inspired.” The Greek term translated “inspired” refers to the air movement over the vocal chords that produces the sound of words. That means the Word of God written down by his prophets is so direct from God’s own Person, it is as though, God spoke it right on to the parchment and/or skins, even though, he used human instruments to write it (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). That is how direct from God the scriptures are presented to the reader.

Jesus says that the words from the mouth represent the heart:

*.....for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*- Mt. 12:344

This means that the moral precepts and principles found in the written Law of God represent the moral state of God’s own heart, and thus express the moral nature of God. This same moral nature is revealed in the words and actions of Jesus Christ. Since God’s moral nature is holy or absolute righteousness, that is why the scriptures say that Christ knew no sin, did no sin and thus no sin could be found in him. Christ revealed the moral nature or heart of God by his words and actions.

God’s heart is the wellspring of all His intents, determinate thoughts and actions. His Word is true and righteous because His heart is true and righteous. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and therefore the written and incarnate word of God is holy because it expresses a holy and righteous heart.

His heart operates by the law/principle of utter delight in that which is good and holy. From this wellspring of utter delight in righteousness flows his thoughts, revealed will and actions. Thus, all that He is and all that He does is altogether righteous.

*....the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* – James 1:17

*.....for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth:* - Dan. 9:14

It is that immutable delight in righteousness that defines His nature to be holy. Therefore, His intents, thoughts, words and actions are the standard of what defines holiness and righteous for all His creation. To be conformed to His moral image is to think, speak and do according to the heart of God. Conformation to his will is conformation to the heart of God.

His revealed will and all of His purposes flow from His inward delight in righteousness – His heart! Even his permission for sin is confined within the limits of righteous designs (Psa. 76:10). His eternal purposes are conceived in His delight for righteousness and therefore are holy and pure. The scriptures are “breathed out” (inspired) from God’s very heart and therefore provide a revelation of what is righteousness. Therefore, the revealed Law of God provides knowledge of what righteousness is, as well what sin is by contrast (Rom. 3:20,23).

His words and actions cannot make Him holier than He already is. His words and actions only reveal what he is by nature. His actions do not produce “delight” in holiness but only reveal what He delights in by nature. This inner

condition of delight in righteousness is “the law” that operates within God and defines His moral nature to be “love, as love *“rejoiceth in truth.”*”

The same thing can be seen in reverse in fallen man. The heart of the fallen man delights in sin. The delight of their heart is the wellspring of all their attitudes, word and actions:

*But those things which proceed out of the mouth **come forth from the heart**; and they defile the man. **For out of the heart proceed** evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: - Mt. 15:18-19*

The internal delight in righteousness is “*the law*” that operates in the heart of God, just as inner delight in sin is “*the law of sin*” that operates in the heart of fallen man. That is precisely why Paul defines the human will in immutable terms of rebellion.

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is **not subject to** the law of God, **neither indeed can be**. So then they that are in the flesh **cannot please God**. – Rom. 8:7-8*

That is precisely why any attempt to observe the Law of God in order to obtain such a righteous heart is impossible, as a heart must first be righteous by nature in order to express thoughts, words, and actions of righteousness. Those who have no righteous heart cannot express righteousness:

*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! – Deut. 5:29*

Thus it is the “heart” of both God and man which is the source of the moral character of their attitudes, words and actions rather than the reverse. The nature of the tree is known by its fruit. An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit any more than a good tree can bring forth evil fruit.

Therefore, the law of God is not a moral “duty” which can be implemented in order to please God, but rather must be the expression of a heart that delights in righteousness. Such is the heart of God. Hence, the Law of God is called “*the righteousness of God*” (His holiness) as it reveals what God delights in according to His moral nature (His love).

All attempts to observe God’s Law that originate from anything other than a heart rooted in love for righteousness only produces “*workers of iniquity*” (Mt. 7:23). God looks upon the heart, and if the heart is wicked so is everything that flows from it (motives, thoughts, words and actions).

Therefore, the revealed Law of God was never intended to be a pattern to copy or rules to be adopted or a moral standard to reform an evil heart.

The Law of God is “spiritual” (Rom. 7:13) because it is the manifestation of the rule of operation within the heart from which flows the moral nature of the motives, attitudes, words and actions of any moral being. The visible manifestations are but manifest consequences of the spiritual condition of a heart.

Doing the will of God must originate with what a person **is** by nature rather than what they want to become by actions. That is why the beatitudes are descriptive of what people “**are**” rather than **doing** certain things in order to become - “*blessed are the poor in spirit....meek...hunger*”

*and thirst...merciful...*” A person must first **be** of a certain moral nature before they can do the will of God. That is why all sinners “*must*” be born again (Jn. 3:3). That is why God must first give a “*new*” heart (Ezek. 26:26-27) because all acceptable motives, attitudes, words and actions can only flow from a heart that delights in righteousness.

Therefore, the Law of God is “spiritual” as it expresses the intents of a righteous heart. It is in that sense, it is called the “law” of God as it manifests the moral rule that operates within the heart of God and thus reveals the moral core of God’s own nature.

The very essence of this “delight” in righteousness can be summarized in one word – “love” and thus God “is” Love.<sup>1</sup> Love is treating others as you would want to be treated. All the law and the prophets hang upon this principle. Love is the fulfilling of the Law of God.

Only a heart operating according to that law pleases God. Only actions rooted in such love are acceptable unto God. No fallen creature has such a heart. Such a heart must be given by God (Ezek. 36:26-27) and is a creative work of God (Eph. 2:10). As long as a person is “*in the flesh*” they cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). They must be born again “*in the Spirit*” (Rom. 8:9) or given a new heart created in “*righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) before they can please God. They must obtain the heart of God to think, talk and act like God. That heart in principle is to treat others like you want to be treated – God is love.

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<sup>1</sup> Gods nature consists of more than love, but love describes what God is in regard to his moral nature. For example, God is eternal, immutable, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient and thus, more than love. Love refers to his moral nature.

## Form versus Principle

Some may argue that not everything written within the Law of God expresses God's moral nature.

It is true that not everything found in the written Law of God deals with moral issues. There are cultural, geographical, and biographical materials. There are historical accounts of the sins of men. However, every **commandment** found in the written Law of God has a moral basis behind it. At minimum, its moral value is derived from the fact that it originates with God and violation of it would be sin against God.

Moreover, in addition to clear and explicit moral precepts there are moral principles/truths clothed in administrative ceremonial forms. Ceremonial ordinances are designed to present truths in pictorial form. The form is transitory and temporal until the truth pictured is fulfilled in time and history.

For example, the Old Testament Tabernacle, its furniture, ordinances and sacrifices symbolized salvation provided by God through the Person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ.. When Christ came and fulfilled these pre-first coming types, their administration was abolished (Col. 2:14-16). The old covenant "house of God" and its ministry and ordinances were replaced by another "house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15) with its ministry and symbolic ordinances (baptism, Lord's Supper) that anticipate in type what will be fulfilled by the Second Coming of Christ.

For example, let us consider the dietary laws. In addition to health considerations<sup>2</sup>, some animals were to be

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<sup>2</sup> Some restrictions due to no refrigeration or means to keep food fresh

regarded as “unclean” due to visible characteristics seen in their visible form, associations and/or practices that typified either evil or good in principle. The animal was created by God and therefore was not inherently evil, but what it symbolized was either morally clean or unclean.

One classification of animal that was to be considered unclean were scavenger animals (Lions, dogs, bears, crows, etc.) who lived off of dead things and killing things. The moral lesson behind these object lessons should be quite obvious. The fallen nature is spiritually dead and lives off death. On the other hand, one aspect of the clean animals is they had cloven hoofs that pictured the principle of a separated walk. Thus moral principles are found in their visible “form.”

In Acts 10:10-16 God gives Peter a vision of all kinds of ceremonial unclean animals and tells him to arise and eat. Peter responds that he has never eaten contrary to the dietary law of Leviticus. God tells him not to call unclean what God has made clean.

*And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.* – Acts 10:15

The animal’s nature and characteristics have not changed. How can God now call clean what he formerly called unclean if the animals by inherent nature were unclean?

Can God make what is immoral by nature to be moral or regard evil good? No, God condemns those who call evil good and good evil. So, how can God declare clean what formerly He declared as unclean?



The answer is that the animal was never inherently unclean in and of itself as God created all animals. The animal was only used by God as a visible object lesson to symbolize what is morally clean or unclean.

The administration of these object lessons was abolished by the cross (Col. 2:16). Hence, the animals were no longer to be regarded as unclean or unfit for food. Secondly, these animals had been representative of a people (Gentiles) who by their habits were morally unclean but God had saved Cornelius and his household and therefore, redemption of the anti-type was redemption of the type as well.

Peter did not understand this vision until he came to the house of Gentiles. He then tells the Gentiles what this vision meant:

*And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. – Acts 10:28*

Unclean animals were used by God to picture immoral people and their practices. The Gentiles served other gods and practiced immoral habits. The foods that God condemned as “unclean” were the very foods used by the Gentiles. The most intimate and practical means of fellowship was over dinner. By condemning certain foods used by the Gentiles, God made it difficult for the Jews to fellowship and inter-marry Gentiles and thus provided an obstacle to help keep ungodly practices out of Israel. At the same time, the characteristics of those animals provided the basis for instructing them in the immoral character of the nations around them.

The idea of separation characterized all of the ceremonial laws. Whether it was separating various different kinds of seeds, cloth, animals, or foods, the primary object lesson was “*be ye separate*” and “*come out from among them.*”

*And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;*

*And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.* – Lev. 10:10-11

*And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.* – Lev. 20:26

However, the form or object used in the ceremonial commandment had no moral value except to serve as a visual to teach the moral principle of separation from immoral values.

God had cleansed the house of Cornelius in regard to his purpose of salvation, and therefore this Gentile family was no longer to be considered “unclean” by Peter and the Jews. Therefore, the visual object lessons used by God to separate Jews from Gentiles was abolished under the New Covenant administration.

*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

*Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.* – Col. 2:14-17

Such ordinances were shadows whereas the substance was Christ. The shadows could be abolished without destroying the substance or moral principles they were designed to teach. Since Christ fulfilled the types by his coming and life and death, the “shadow” ordinances have been abolished in regard to their observance. However, they still serve as teaching examples between good and evil.

*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* – 1 Cor. 10:11

The Apostle Paul claims that under the new covenant administration there is no unclean food:

*For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:* - 1 Tim. 4:4

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God designed every aspect of Jewish life to be a teaching moment, from their birth to their death. God designed the ceremonial laws as teaching pictures somewhat like allegories or parables to convey moral

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<sup>3</sup> After the fall of man only herbs were allowed for food (Gen. 3:18). After the flood God allowed all edible meats for food (Gen. 9:3) while accepting only certain animals as “clean” for sacrificial offerings. During the period between Moses and Christ the Levitical dietary law was imposed upon Israel (Lev. 10-11). Between the first and second coming of Christ nothing edible is regarded as unclean (Acts 10:9-15; 1 Tim. 4:4-5; Rom. 14:14).

lessons to teach them to discern right from wrong or clean from unclean.

*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. – Gal. 3;24*

## The Law Before Moses

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Prior to Moses there was no written moral Law of God<sup>4</sup> that we are aware. However, there is abundant evidence there was an oral tradition of commandments passed down from Adam to following generations. Adam lived over 930 years overlapping the life of Methuslah who died in the year of the flood. Shem, the son of Noah, whose life overlapped Methuslah by one hundred years did not die until Isaac married Rebekah. Therefore, Abraham lived at the same time as Shem who was just the third generation from Adam. God said of Abraham:

*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. – Gen. 18:19*

Even before Israel reached Mount Sinai where the Ten Commandments were given Israel God had said to them:

*Ex. 16:4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every*

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<sup>4</sup> It does appear that Moses was the compiler of the book of Genesis, as he used several books in existence. Genesis repeatedly refers to “these are the generations” (Gen. 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 9:12; 10:1; 10:32; 11:10,27; 25:12; 25:13, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2) and that these were in “book” or written form (Gen. 5:1). This may account for different style of writings found in the book of Genesis. However, it does show that a written record was kept and passed down to the days of Moses through the godly line from Adam. Most likely, Moses obtained these records from his father-in-law Jethro, who knew the Lord and was a “priest” of God in the land of Midian (Exodus 3:1).

*day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.*

*5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.*

*22 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.*

*23 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.*

*24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.*

*25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field.*

*26 Six days ye shall gather it; **but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath,** in it there shall be none.*

*27 And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.*

*28 **And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?***

*29 See, for **that the LORD hath given you the sabbath,** therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.*

Therefore, the law of God was certainly known among God's people from the time of Adam.

Moreover, Paul tells the Roman congregations that God revealed "in" humans the ability to know God exists (Rom. 1:19)

*Because that which may be known of God is manifest **in** them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse**: - Rom. 1:19-20*

God created within all humans the faculty of conscience that performs "*the work of the Law*":

*For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:*

*Which shew **the work of the law** written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) – Rom. 2:14-15*

The "*work*" which the written Law provides is a revelation of right and wrong, and thus provides a standard to judge their attitudes and actions. Conscience provides a similar moral standard – "*bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*"

Paul says **this work** of the Law is “*written in their hearts*”<sup>5</sup>

The difference is that the written Law of God is more comprehensive and definitive in revelation of right and wrong. Yet, the same essential principle that all the law and the prophets hang upon – “*love thy neighbor as thyself*” is the inherent basic principle by which the conscience works. This is the light that lighteth every man coming into the world from birth (Jn. 1:9).<sup>6</sup>

No family and/or cultural unit of society can survive without some form of this principle of light being implemented. Every culture tweaks this inherent moral principle (love God and love thy neighbor as thyself) by applying it to what they deem essential for that culture to survive. All past civilizations bear record that some degree of this basic principle can be found.

The conscience is man’s moral compass that makes him personally accountable to God for violation of whatever degree of moral light is revealed by conscience, creation or written revelation. Thus conscience works in man providing the same function designed for the written Law of God – knowledge of sin and righteousness:

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<sup>5</sup> Significantly Paul is not saying the Law of God is written in their hearts, as that is the work of the new birth (Jer. 31:33-34) but only that the “work” of the Law is written in their hearts in the faculty of conscience. The new birth produces a love for God’s law (Rom. 7:21) whereas, conscience provides only judicial review of your attitude and actions but gives no love for righteousness.

<sup>6</sup> The “Word” is light and light is life (Jn. 1:4). The “Word” is the source of all physical life (Jn. 1:9), as well as all spiritual life (Jn. 1:12-13). In giving physical life comes the light of conscience.



.....***by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested...*** - Rom. 3:20-21

So before God wrote the Ten Commandments upon stone by His own hand, He had already provided the “***work of the law written in their hearts.***”

In addition to conscience, prior to the fall of man, God communicated to Adam certain basic fundamental laws of righteousness called “*the way*” of the Lord. These basics were passed down from generation to generation in the line of Seth, while despised, violated and perverted by the line of Cain.

If one studies all the accounts concerning those who lived prior to Exodus 20, it will be readily seen that all Ten Commandments had been known and violated by men before God ever revealed them in written form to Moses. Cain was condemned for murder. Abraham was condemned for lying. Lot had a problem with covetousness and greed. Jacob’s uncle had a problem with idolatry and etc. Indeed, James says it is impossible to violate one of the Ten Commandments (James 2:11) without violating all of them (James 2:10).

From at least Genesis chapter four God had established a time, place and sacrifice for acceptable worship.

**1. The appointed time** – “in the process of time” or more literally “at the end of days.” – Gen. 4:3

**2. The appointed place** – “unto the Lord....went out from the presence of the Lord” – Gen. 4:3,16

**3. The appointed sacrifice** – “And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering” Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4

Therefore, the very same principle that summarizes the Law (love) was written in principle upon the conscience of man from creation. Adam was created with understanding that he was to love the Lord His God with all of his being and others as himself. The principle of love was inscribed upon his conscience and upon the conscience of every man born of Adam.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Rom. 5:13-14 does not refer to violation of the light of conscience but rather to “the sin” committed by one man (Adam) that brought universal death upon the entire human race. Individual sin can be attributed to violation of conscience but it cannot be cause for the entrance of death into the human race (Rom. 5:12). The only law prior to Moses that can account for universal death is the violation of the Law in Gen. 2:17 by one man – Adam. Infant mortality proves that violation of conscience cannot be the attributing cause of death.

## The Universality of the Law

The law was not merely given to the Jew, but it was given

*“that **every mouth** may be stopped, and **the whole world** may become guilty before God.* – Rom. 3:19

*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all **under sin**; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: -*  
Rom. 3:9,10

Obviously, the Gentiles had not been given the written law of God. However, the moral principle upon which all the law and the prophets hung – “*thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*” is inscribed upon the human conscience of all moral creatures. Hence, what the written law is comprehensively, the conscience provides in summary. Hence, the essence of the Law of God is universal.

Where there is no law there is no sin. Therefore, one must be “*under the law*” to be “*under sin*.” Paul says the Gentiles were “*under sin*” and therefore they were “*under the law*.” Paul says that “*the whole world*” is condemned by the Law, not just Jews. He says it stops “*every mouth*” not just Jewish mouths.

The vital principle of God’s law is reflected in human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). God put a moral conscience in man to give witness that there is a moral God (Rom. 1:19). This is what makes every man morally accountable to God so “*that they are without excuse*” (Rom. 1:20).

When the Sabbath was instituted there were no Jews, but yet the One who instituted the Sabbath, or the “*Lord of the*

*Sabbath*” says the Sabbath “*was made for* [the] *man*” (Mk. 2:26) or mankind, not merely for the Jews.

Does sin exist today in our world, and in the lives of Christians? If so, then the Law still exists, as sin is the violation of the Law (1 Jn. 3:6). There can be no sin where there is no law. Hence, where there is sin there is law.<sup>8</sup>

If the cross did away with the Law of God, then there is nothing by which God may define sin or judge the works of anyone on the Day of Judgment. For God to do this would mean He joins with sinners in repudiation of His law! However, it is quite the opposite, because the Law of God originates within the very heart of God and He cannot repudiate it without repudiating Himself.

Did the cross make it right for Christians to murder, covet, lie, steal, take God’s name in vain, etc.? If not, then the Law has not been abolished by the cross.

Does faith in Christ make void the Law of God?

*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.* – Rom. 3:31<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This does not contradict Paul’s words in Romans 5:13-14 because Paul’s argument is that no publicly revealed law existed between Adam and Moses and so the only revealed law that can attribute for universal sin is the law violated in Genesis 2:17.

<sup>9</sup> Faith vindicates the Law, because faith is in the gospel of Christ, which proclaims that Christ honored the Law by a sinless life and paid the penalty of the law rather than violated and despised the Law. The gospel proclaims the law has been fully satisfied by Christ. Christ abolished the public administration of the Old Covenant, with its temple and ordinances (Col. 2:14-16). We are no longer under the condemnation of the law or its penalty. However, as a standard of righteousness it is universal and eternal.

After specifically quoting the tenth commandment, Paul gives his summary evaluation of the moral law of God when he says:

*“Wherefore, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good....The law is spiritual.” – Rom. 7:12, 14*

Does the new covenant do away with the Law of God? If so, then why does Paul say of himself *“I delight in the law of God after the inward man”* (Rom. 7:22).

If the new covenant does away with the Law, then why does Paul claim what was written upon stones is the same law written upon the hearts of believers:

*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*  
– 2 Cor. 3:3

James quoted the ten commandments as the *“law of liberty”* for the Christians:

*For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.*

*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*- James 2:11-12

If the Law of God manifests the righteousness found in the very nature of God it must be universal. Paul claims it reveals *“the righteousness of God”* (Rom. 7:21-22)? God’s

law can be summarized in one word “love” and love is eternal as God Himself.

## God's Design for the Law

God never designed nor gave the public administration of the law to regenerate, justify or sanctify sinners. God gave His Son to accomplish that through His Spirit.

God designed the law to negatively reveal and define the nature of sin while positively designed it to reveal and define the standard of God's righteousness and holiness.

*....Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, **Thou shalt not covet**.* – Rom. 7:7

There can be no question Paul specifically had the Ten Commandments in view, as he is quoting the tenth commandment.

Indeed, Paul tells the Romans that the law provides the knowledge of sin:

*....for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* – Rom. 3:20

The Apostle John tells his readers that it is the law that gives definition to sin”

*.....for sin is the transgression of the law.* – 1 Jn. 3:6

The Law serves the same purpose today as it was designed to do then. It defines the nature of sin and righteousness.

There is no sin where there is no law, as sin is the violation of the Law of God. Sin has been on earth since

the Garden of Eden and will be on earth until the new heaven and earth are ushered in.<sup>10</sup>

In the garden, God made the terms of sinlessness the condition to avoid death (Gen. 2:17). This same condition is the basis of the covenant between God and Israel:

*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, **he shall live in them**: I am the LORD. – Lev. 18:5*

Therefore, the terms of life in the Garden of Eden are the terms found in the “old” Covenant between God and Israel.

The difference between the two is that pre-fallen Adam had a pure heart and was sinless, as God made him “upright” (Eccl. 7:29). Adam had the ability to be justified by the law, but post-fallen Adam does not have a pure heart and is not sinless and cannot be justified by the Law.

Remember, the heart is the wellspring of all our motives, attitudes, words and actions (our works). If the tree (heart) is evil, so are the fruits (our works). First the tree must be made good (regenerated) before the fruits can be good (works). God must first give fallen man a new heart before righteousness can be produced through and by him:

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

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<sup>10</sup> Sin existed between Adam and Moses but not due to violation of the Mosaic Law. Death was a result of the representative disobedient act of Adam. All men sinned “in Adam” and “death by sin.”



*And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* – Ezek. 36:26-27

*For we are his workmanship **created in Christ Jesus unto good works**.....* – Eph. 2:10

Ephesians 2:10 is referring to works that God regards as “good” in the life of the believer. Notice, that such “good” works are the produce of the new birth or the creative work of God. Thus, the unregenerated man is incapable of producing works that God regards as “good” in His sight.

*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is **created in righteousness and true holiness**.* – Eph. 4:24

By giving the written Law to man, God is in no way implying that fallen man is capable of achieving justification of life by the law. He is merely revealing the kind of righteousness that must originate from the heart in order to inherit eternal life. He repeatedly denies the Law of God can justify the wicked heart with its evil fruits (Deut. 5:29; Jn. 7:19; Rom. 3:19-20; etc.).

No fallen man is capable of achieving that end, as we will see when we examine the Law’s righteous standard, and what it means to keep the law.

No man prior to the cross was justified by keeping the law any more than any man after the cross can be justified by keeping the law. Both are saved and justified by faith in the very same gospel (Heb. 4:2; Acts 10:43; 26:22-23; Rom. 4:5-6; 10:16; etc.). They (pre-cross saints) looked forward to the cross by faith and we (post-cross saints) look back to the cross by faith. They were justified by faith in the

promise of God that Christ would come (Gen. 3:15) and we are justified by faith in the fulfillment of that promise:

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. – Rom. 3:24-26*

*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. – Heb. 9:15*

*To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. – Acts 10:43*

## What it means to “keep” the Law?

There are three major objections that must be addressed in defining what it means to keep the Law. The first objection is keeping the Law does not demand sinless perfection but only relative obedience while confessing our sins. Therefore, fallen men can be justified by keeping the law if they continue to confess their sins and ask forgiveness where they fail.

The second objection is that the phrase “works of the Law” and “without works” refers only to becoming a Jew by circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law, rather than a comprehensive standard of right and wrong. Hence, fallen man can be justified by good works because the Mosaic law had been abolished.

The third objection is that “justification without works” refers only to the standard for justification but does not deny lost persons can do “good” works in God’s sight. Therefore, just because we cannot be justified before God by our works does not mean we cannot do “good” works in God’s sight.

In this chapter the first objection will be dealt with “the Law does not demand sinless perfection but only relative obedience while confessing our sins.” In other words, the law can be kept by fallen men just as long as they confess their sins.

If a person does not know what standard he or she must achieve to be justified, then how can he or she ever know what is good enough?

As previously shown, keeping the Law must begin with the heart and its motives, as the heart is the wellspring for

all motives, attitudes, words and actions.. If the heart is wrong, then all that flows from that heart is wrong in God's sight.

Jesus told the most pious Jews that none of them kept the Law according to the standard demanded by God's Law:

*Did not Moses give you<sup>11</sup> the law, and yet **none of you keepeth the law?** Why go ye about to kill me?*

– Jn. 7:19

He did not deny they confessed their sins, but keeping the law by Biblical definition demands that the law is never violated even in one point as to violate it in one point is to violate every point of the Law:

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and **yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.***

*For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. – James 2:10-11*

You can clearly see by “law” he has in view the Ten Commandments (v. 11). James defines keeping the law as not violating “***one point***” of the law or else you have violated every point of the law and have not kept the law at all. Therefore, one must keep every point to keep one point of the Law. To keep every point of the law and not come short at any point is sinlessness.

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<sup>11</sup> Jesus is not limiting “you” to the immediate audience, as Moses did not give the law to the immediate audience. The “you” here refers to Israel. The words “none of you” denies that any of Israel keep the Law.

Paul defined proper keeping of the law as continuing in all things written in the Law:

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. – Gal. 3:10*

Therefore “continueth” (present tense on going action) is required to avoid being “cursed” by the Law or coming under its penal condemnation.

If you want an example of what it means to keep the Law in God’s sight, it is illustrated for you in the life of Christ.

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. – 2 Cor. 5:21*

*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: - 1 Pet. 2:22*

*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. – 1 Jn. 3:5*

*Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? – Jn. 8:46*

One sin would have brought him under the condemnation of the Law and classified him as a sinner. He was totally without any sin. He never “*knew*” sin by experience. He never “*did*” sin because “*in him is no sin*.” Thus no one could prove (“*convinceth*”) he ever sinned. This is God’s standard for keeping the law – sinlessness.

Jesus told his audience that the Law required a greater righteousness than could be found in the Scribes and Pharisees who were regarded as the elite law keepers of his day (Mt. 5:20). Jesus defined the greater righteousness demanded by the Law to be equal to the righteousness found in the Father (Mt. 5:46). The Father never needed to ask for forgiveness because the Father never sinned throughout His whole existence. Similarly, Christ never sinned throughout his whole life and thus never needed to ask forgiveness of sin. This is the kind of righteous life demanded by the Law – a life never condemned by Law and thus never needing to ask forgiveness. This is the only kind of life of good works that could justify sinners before God and that is why Christ had to live a sinless life to be a fit substitute to justify sinners before God. No other kind of life satisfies the Law's demands for righteousness

No fallen man of Adam can be justified by keeping the Law either before or after the new birth simply because justification by the law requires **a whole life** of sinlessness and not even born again children of God are without sin(1 Jn. 1:8-10).

However, much like the vast majority of Christendom today, the Scribes and Pharisees interpreted the Law of God according to an inferior righteousness that comes short of the glory of God's own moral righteousness.

The Scribes and Pharisees interpreted the Law according to the traditions of the elders. When Jesus repeatedly said, "*you have heard*" (Mt. 5:20-48), he was referring to the traditions of the elders. These traditions were communicated and transmitted orally from one generation to another generation.

Jesus, as God in the flesh, corrected these flawed interpretations of the elders by saying “*But I say unto you.*” His interpretations of God’s Law of righteousness far exceeded the standard of “good” or righteousness found in the Scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus claimed that keeping the law for entrance into heaven required a righteousness greater than provided in the lives of the Scribes and Pharisees to enter the kingdom of God:

*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall **exceed the righteousness** of the scribes and Pharisees, **ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.** – Mt. 5:20*

Jesus claimed that outwardly they were but white washed sepulchers. However, within they were as dead men’s bones and full of uncleanness.

*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.. – Mt. 23:27*

Externals can be deceiving, but God looks upon the heart motives behind all that is thought, determined, said and done. The Law of God is “*spiritual*” (Rom. 7:14) and deals with the root of sin in the hearts of men.

He interpreted the Ten Commandments to be violated by impure thoughts and wrong motives of the heart, even though, those impure thoughts were not carried out by external acts. To have unjust anger violated “*thou shalt not murder*”, just as, a mere look of lust violated “*thou shalt not commit adultery.*” The Law of God viewed the violation as

already taken place “*in the heart*” regardless if it ever externally occurred.

*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her **hath committed adultery with her already in his heart**.* Mt. 5:28

The Scribes and Pharisees interpreted and applied the Law of God by external conformity instead of heart conformity to God’s righteous standards. To those who believed violation of the law had to do merely with externals, he told them if their hand or eye were responsible for sin then cut it off, and pluck it out. However, they would find out that without eyes and limbs sin must be traced to the wicked motives and thoughts of the heart of man:

*But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth **from the heart**; and they defile the man.*

*For **out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies**: -Mt. 15:18-19*

Ultimately sin is traced to the heart motive behind all one says and does. If the motive is wrong everything that results from that motive is evil (“*evil thoughts*” and evil words and actions). The only right motive is:

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do **all to the glory of God**.* – 1 Cor. 10:31

Everything originating from a heart that “*comes short*” of this motive (“the glory of God”) is sin and that is precisely why Paul said,



*There is no difference, for all have sinned, **and come short of the glory of God.** – Rom. 3:22,23*

The standard of righteousness required by the Law is righteousness that does not come short of the glory of God. Hence, sins of omission violate the Law of God as much as sins of commission. The latter violates it negatively while the former violates it positively.

Sinless observance of the Law without omission or commission is what Jesus demanded when he said:

*And he answering said, You shall love the Lord your God with **all** your heart, and with **all** your soul, and with **all** your strength, and with **all** your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. – Lk. 10:27*

Sinlessness requires the **totality of your being** (“*all...all...all...all*”), beginning from the inward motive of the heart, to the outward words, and actions, all without violation of one point in God’s Law either by omission or commission **throughout the totality of your entire life.**

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and **yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.***

*For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. – James 2:10-11*

When Jesus finished correcting the traditions of men, his interpretation of the Law’s standard for righteousness is stated thus:

*Be ye therefore perfect, **even as** your Father which is in heaven is perfect. – Mt. 5:48*

Our Father in heaven has never sinned once in eternity past. He is without sin presently. He will never sin in the future. He will never have to be forgiven and repent of sin. He is completely and utterly sinless. He was **without sin the totality of His Being and existence**. This is the standard of righteousness that one must attain to enter heaven. Such attainment exceeds the righteousness of all men.

When you understand that a justified life must flow from a heart that delights in righteousness and which has never violated one point of God's Law from your birth to death, thus never needed to repent, never needed to be forgiven and never thought, determined, said or did anything from any other motive than to glorify God, then, you will understand Paul's words when he said, "*all have sinned and **come short** of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23).

Jesus told the rich young ruler "*There is none righteous, but one and that is God*" (Mt. 19:17). That is a universal denial with only one exception (God)!

Paul said "*there is none righteous, no not one*" (Rom. 3:10) because he was using the Law of God as the standard of righteousness (Rom. 3:19-20).

This is why "*no flesh*" can be justified for eternal life by keeping the law (Rom. 3:20) and why "*the whole world*" (Rom. 3:19) is guilty before God and "*every mouth*" is stopped. One sin places you under the curse of the law, and brings eternal condemnation by God's Law.

- These Biblical realities explain why a sinless God must leave heaven and take upon himself the form of man and do what no sinner can do – satisfy all the righteous demands of the law by His own life and death.

- They make clear why salvation must be based upon “substitutionary” atonement, as no sinner can be justified by his own life, as neither union with Christ nor impartation of Christ’s righteousness can produce a **whole life** without sin.
- They outline why justification must be by imputed rather than imparted righteousness, or a righteousness foreign to that of the “ungodly” (Rom 4:5) found only in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Progressive sanctification cannot produce a sinless life as it starts too late in the life of an elect and is “progressive” and never perfect sanctification in this life.
- They reveal why justification is “by faith” rather than “by faithfulness” as no saved sinner, regardless of a new nature, regardless of the indwelling Spirit of God can produce an entire sinless life. It must be received “by faith” in God’s provision of Christ’s finished and sufficient life and death for sinners.

Justification under the law of God requires an **entire sinless life** that flows forth from an absolute sinless heart. This explains why the good news of the gospel is about what Christ did **for sinners**, rather than about what sinners do **for Christ**. The Gospel is about what Christ did **for** sinners, rather than Christ does **through** sinners to obtain eternal life.

*For he hath made him to be sin **for** us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God **in** him. – 2 Cor. 5:21*

- They expose every false gospel, and every system of theology that is based upon lowering the standard of Law from sinlessness, so that sinful men can be justified, or raising the nature of fallen men to sinlessness, so they can keep the Law.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> God recognizes that men define “good” on a relative basis and thus the scriptures speak of “good” men in the sight of men..

## What are the “works of the Law”?

*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not **by the works of the law**: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. – Gal. 2:16*

*Therefore by **the deeds of the law** there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. – Rom. 3:20*

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive **the things done in his body**, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. – 2 Cor. 5:10*

*For God shall bring **every work** into judgment, with **every secret thing**, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. – Ecc. 12:14*

Some insist that “the works of the Law” (Gal. 2:16) or “deeds of the Law” (Rom. 3:20) refer to becoming a Jew under the Mosaic Law rather than being any denial of justification by works for salvation under grace. Thus, in their mind, “works of the law” and “deeds of the Law” have only to do with Judaism and nothing to do with Christianity. They claim one must be justified by works and that is not contrary to grace.

However, there are many problems to their restriction of “works of the Law” and “deeds of the Law” to Judaism. These phrases are used in Paul’s doctrine of justification in Romans 3:24-5:2 wherein Abraham is given as the ultimate pattern for justification by faith for all who believe without

“the works of the Law” (Rom. 3:28). Abraham is said to be justified by grace “without works” (Rom. 4:1-6) while he was still “in uncircumcision” (Rom. 4:9-12) 430 years prior to the Law being given to Moses (Gal. 3:17).

Since the Mosaic Law did not exist at the time of Abraham, therefore, Paul’s definition of “works” cannot possibly refer to the Mosaic Law. Instead, the term “works” in the context of justification must refer to all those “things done in the body whether they be good or bad” (2 Cor. 10:5) including the secret things of the heart (Eccl. 12:14) such as “evil thoughts” (Mt. 15:19) as determined by the moral law of God.

*But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed **evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies**: - Mt. 15:18-19*

In short, our works are those things performed in the body that proceed from the heart, including the motives and thoughts that may or may not materialize in actions (Mt. 5:22,27-28).

Paul clearly states that both Jew and Gentile are both “*under sin*” (Rom. 3:9) and thus “*under the law*” (Rom. 3:19). The Mosaic Law is simply the more comprehensive revelation of the very same principle of righteousness by which the conscience in every Gentile operates and thus conscience does “*the work of the Law*” (Rom. 2:15).

Therefore, in denying that any man can be justified under the Law of Moses (which is the more comprehensive revelation of the righteousness) he is denying that justification can be obtained by obedience to any lesser

revelation of God's righteousness, such as, the standard revealed in the conscience of gentiles who are without the broader and more comprehensive Law of Moses. If the Jew with the more comprehensive revelation of righteousness cannot be justified, then the Gentile with the less comprehensive revelation of righteousness cannot be justified, and therefore "*no flesh*" can be justified in His sight and "*the whole world*" is guilty in His sight and "*every mouth*" shut from claiming justification by righteousness obtained by their obedience:

*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: - Rom. 3:19-20*

Hence, the "works" or "deeds" of the law refer to all things done in our body to satisfy either the principles and precepts revealed to human conscience and/or through special revelation (oral or written). We are not justified by our own observance of God's righteous commands but by "*the things done in the body*" by Jesus Christ alone. We are justified by the personal obedience of Christ that satisfied all the just demands of God's law against us. His obedience is what justifies us when imputed to us by faith.

That is why we are justified "*by faith*" **without** works and not with our works of obedience.

*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith **without** the deeds of the law. – Rom. 3:28*

*Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness **without** works, - Rom. 4:6*

That is why we are justified by *imputed* righteousness rather than by our own righteous obedience or by *imparted* righteousness.

No man is justified by personal obedience in God's sight, as it only requires violation in one point to be a violation of all points (James 2:10-11) and violation of any point is sufficient to make you a sinner and bring you under its eternal condemnation.

Therefore "works" are all those "things done in the body" whether they be good or bad, whether they be secret imaginations of the heart or words and actions.



## Created in Christ Jesus “unto” Good Works

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. – Eph. 2:10*

The third objection is that “justification without works” refers only to the standard for justification, but does not deny lost persons can do “good” works in God’s sight. Therefore, just because we cannot be justified before God by our works does not mean we cannot do “good” works in God’s sight.

To justify this argument, they quote certain examples from Scripture and use philosophical arguments.

However, they fail to distinguish between how men regard “good” versus how God regards “good.” Men judge goodness according to external factors (words, actions), but God determines “good” by the heart motive behind such words and actions.

*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. – 1 Sam. 16:7*

Jesus claims there is none “good” but one and that is God:

*And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: - Mt. 19:17*

He did not say there is none that “does” good, but “is” good. That speaks to the essential nature of the human heart and its moral state. The human heart is defiled and wicked:

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? – Jer. 17:9*

Christ likens the state of the heart to either a “good” or “evil” tree and denies that an “evil” tree is capable of producing good “fruit” (good works):

*Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. – Mt. 12:33-35*

*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. – Mt. 7:16-18*

Paul says there is none that “doeth” good (Rom. 3:12) That speaks to the essential nature of human actions.

That is precisely why God must give a “new” heart because the unregenerated heart has no ability to obey God:

*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! – Deut. 5:29*

*Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. – Deut. 29:4*

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. – Ezek. 36:26-27*

Notice that fallen man needs a heart from God to not only perceive spiritual things but to obey God. Paul says that “good works” are the product of first being created in Christ Jesus (spiritual quickening):

*For we are his workmanship, **created** in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. – Eph. 2:10*

Paul claims that prior to the new birth they were “children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2-3) and only after being “created in Christ Jesus” were they capable of doing “good works” (Eph. 2:10).

The natural unregenerated man cannot do “good” works in the sight of God because “good” works can be “good” if they originate with a “good” heart and no natural born man has such a heart.

Therefore, the natural man is capable of only relative goodness or good in comparison with manifest evil versus manifest goodness or apparent goodness rather than any real goodness that comes only from a good heart.

That is why neither the unregenerate or the regenerated man can produce “good” works by the power of self-will (Rom. 7:18b). That is why all works originating with self rather than the inward new man by the power of the Holy Spirit are all as “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

## How does Love fulfill the Law?

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.** – Mt. 22:37-40*

*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: **for this is the law and the prophets.** – Mt. 7:12*

All the law is summarized by the two great commandments which speak about “love” for God and man. These two great commandments are further summarized in one word – “love.”

*Owe no man any thing, **but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.** For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore **love is the fulfilling of the law.** – Rom. 13:8-10*

Love is a condition and manifestation of the heart. The Scriptures says that “**God is love.**” That is moral state of God’s heart which is manifested in all of His actions.

But what is this “love”? We are talking about a special kind of love. The Greek term translated “love” in these

passages is the term **agape**. This is the term used to describe God's love or love like God's. God's type of love can only **originate from a heart** that is governed by, and unconditionally committed to, righteousness. Why? God's love must be based upon something other than externals. God can love the external unlovely, and therefore it is not the merits of the object that determines love but only something within God Himself.

For example, the Bible tells us that when we were yet "enemies" God loved us (Rom. 5:8). Therefore, His love for His enemies was not motivated by any merits found in them but in spite of what they were. Biblical love is an unconditional commitment to do what is right toward self and others simply because righteousness demands it.

Therefore, true agape love can only originate with a heart unconditionally governed and committed to righteousness. True love is inseparable from true righteousness. God is love because God is holy and neither conflict with the other. God's love is not in conflict with God's justice, as God's justice is commitment to doing what is right toward the guilty.

How then can a holy and righteous God love sinners? Does not God's justice demand condemnation of sinners? How then can God love us while enemies and more importantly how can God love anything less than sinless? The answer is Christ. He can love us based upon our sins being justly paid in full by Christ and Christ's righteousness imputed to our account. Hence, in Christ mercy and righteousness have kissed or come together:

*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* Psa. 85:10

All of God's righteous and holy demands have been fully satisfied by Christ in behalf "of all" those given to Him by His Father (Jn. 6:39; 17:2). Therefore, God's love is a just and holy love.

Biblical love is reflected in the traditional marriage vow of unconditional commitment to do what is right for one's spouse in good times and bad times, when you feel like it and when you don't feel like it. Hence, love "*never fails*" (1 Cor. 13:8) because it is an unswerving unconditional commitment to what is true and right.

This is the ultimate aim of the Law of God - unconditional commitment to doing what is right toward God, others and self.

How can man love God and others? Remember, all of God's actions, words, determinate thoughts and motives flow from a heart that delights in righteousness. Love is the heart commitment to righteousness expressed in determinate thoughts, words and deeds.

Only a righteous heart can provide the right kind of motive, determinate thoughts, words and actions that describe love.

The Bible teaches that the natural born man has no such heart and therefore cannot love or please God or man.

*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

– Rom. 8:8-9

Man by nature is at war with God and that is why he is at war with himself, why divorce is in the home, crime in the neighborhood and nations at war with each other. It all originates from his depraved heart.

The Apostle Paul classifies all mankind within one of two categories – “*in the flesh*” versus “*in the Spirit*.”

Those “*in the flesh*” cannot love or please God. Only those “*in the Spirit*” can love and please God. How does one come to be “*in the flesh*” or “*in the Spirit*”?

The phrase “*in the flesh*” refers to the natural state or condition of man when coming into this world. It is the same as being “*born of flesh*” (Jn. 3:6a) whereas “*in the Spirit*” is the same as being “*born of Spirit*” (Jn. 3:6b). It is by natural birth that you came to be “*in the flesh*.” It is by supernatural birth you come to be “*in the Spirit*.”

Infants enter this world “*in the flesh*.” No one needs to train a baby to think, say and do evil as it comes naturally by birth. This condition is due to the fall and is passed from generation to generation from Adam. Death of still born infants is proof that death is not due to personal sins by the infants but due to their presence as one indivisible human nature “*in Adam*” when he sinned (Rom. 5:12-14).

Hence, Biblical love is impossible for natural born humans because of indwelling sin and death at work in their natural born hearts (mind, will and emotions).

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. – Rom. 8:7*

Therefore, the only class of human beings that can “*please*” or love God are those “*in the Spirit*” or “*born of the*



*Spirit.*” Why? Because the moral image that was tarnished by Adam’s sin is restored by the creative work of the Holy Spirit in new birth:

*And have put on the new man, which is **renewed in knowledge after the image** of him that created him: - Col. 3:10*

*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is **created in righteousness and true holiness.** – Eph. 4:24*

*For we are his workmanship **created in Christ Jesus unto good works.....** – Eph. 2:10a*

The new birth makes a difference between what a person was in contrast to what they are after being born again:

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

*Wherein in **time past** ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

*Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) – Eph. 2:1-5*

Regeneration is not a reformation but a supernatural transformation by the creative act of God.

Notice that it is quickening (making spiritually alive) by the Spirit that makes a difference between what people were “*in time past*” and what they are after new birth. The new birth has made an internal moral difference:

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* – 2 Cor. 5:17

The new birth is a creative work of the Holy Spirit that produces a new inward man/heart that operates by, and delights in, the Law of God in keeping with the new testament/covenant:

*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:* - Rom. 7:22

*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; **not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart**.....Who also hath made us able ministers of **the new testament**; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.* – 2 Cor. 3:3,6

The law of God is written upon the regenerated heart in its principle form “love.” In other words, the new heart loves what God loves and hates what God hates:

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

*And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* – Ezek. 36:26-27

However, this creation of a new heart which delights in righteousness is not a means to enable believers to be justified before God by their own personal obedience to the Law. Justification requires a **complete life of sinless** perfection whereas, the born again man's pre-regenerate life is nothing but sin, and his post-regenerate life is not without sin.

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* – 1 Jn. 1:8

Moreover, the entire nature of man is not born again. The human body is not born of the Spirit. Therefore, the "*law of sin*" is still at work in "*the flesh*" (Rom. 7:18-25; Gal. 5:16). Neither is the regenerative work of the Spirit performed upon the "soul" of man, as the "soul" of man is the war zone between indwelling sin and the indwelling Spirit of God. It is the "spirit" of man that is born again (Jn. 3:6; Rom. 8:16). Only this aspect of human nature is "*born again*" or restored to the prefallen "*image of God*" in "*righteousness and true holiness*" (Eph. 4:24). This is necessary in order to provide the Indwelling Holy Spirit of God an inner sanctuary within man that has been cleansed and washed of the defilement of sin (Tit. 3:5). The Holy Spirit indwells that aspect of our human nature that has been fully "*saved*" and fully "*sanctified*" and cannot sin (1 Jn. 3:9). However, that is not true of the rest of our human nature. Within our unregenerated body still resides the indwelling "*law of sin*" (Rom. 7:18-20). Our "*soul*" (conscious self) is the battlefield between the indwelling "*law of sin*" in our body and the indwelling Spirit of God in our spirit (Rom. 7:25).

How then can a regenerate man “love” God in such a way that the law is fulfilled? The answer is only **when** the new heart is being expressed in the life of the believer by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God:

*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. – Rom. 5:5*

This is why we are repeatedly exhorted to “*put on*” the new man and be “*filled*” by the Spirit. It is only **that time** which is lived in the power of the Holy Spirit that gives expression to our righteous heart:

*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit**; - Eph. 5:16-17*

Every day we do battle to redeem our “*time*” (Eph. 5;16). Whatever time we yield to the lusts of indwelling sin is lost for the glory of God, for future rewards and present experiential promises of salvation (peace, joy, growth, etc.).

Whenever the indwelling Spirit of God empowers the righteous and holy motive of the new inward man to be put on in our life, that time, is saved for the glory of God and made to count for Christ. These times are when the Spirit of God “*works in you to both will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philip. 2:13). This is the times when you “*walk in the Spirit.*” These are snapshots of holiness that originate from a sinless inward new man and empowered by a sinless Spirit of God and therefore fulfill the Law of God for temporal blessings and eternal rewards. However, such

snapshots of holiness do not provide any basis for justification before God since they fall short of an entire life of sinlessness. Second, these snapshots of holiness are not the product of our whole person but only of the new inward man. In regard to our whole person, indwelling sin is still at large in our flesh but temporarily mortified by the power of the Spirit when we are walking in the Spirit.

Spiritual maturity is gauged by how much of our life is brought under the leadership of the Spirit. Ultimately our rate of progressive growth in sanctification in this present life is determined by the measure of faith and grace given unto us in keeping with God's purpose for our life (Rom. 12:3,5; Eph. 2:10b).

Therefore, regeneration obtains a "*new heart*" which delights in righteousness (Rom. 7:22). The indwelling Spirit empowers the regenerated new heart (Rom. 8:8-9). As we "*walk in the Spirit*", that is, when our redeemed inward man is empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, then our works are acceptable to God for present blessing and future rewards, because they originate with a righteous motive (heart) and empowered by the "Holy" Spirit.

Hence, good works are the fruits of the new heart empowered by the Holy Spirit. They are not a product of man, regenerated or unregenerated. Indeed, self-crucifixion by the Spirit of God is the prerequisite for manifestation of "good works."

Our inward man, delights in the law of God and operates by the principle of love. When our inward man is put on in our life by the power of the indwelling Spirit then love is the source of our thoughts, attitudes, words and actions and whatever time is lived "*in the Spirit*" is an expression of love that fulfils the Law in our lives.

The difference is that justification before God requires a WHOLE sinless life whereas sanctification is progressive and deals with only PART of our life – the part when we are empowered by the indwelling Spirit so that the righteous new man is put on in our thoughts, words and actions. Justification by faith in Christ obtains entrance into heaven while partial progressive sanctification (snapshots of holiness) obtains experiential blessings of salvation here and now (growth, joy, peace, chastening, usefulness, etc.) and rewards and position in heaven (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

The difference is that one must first be regenerated and justified before they can “fulfill” the law by love.

Only born again justified children of God can fulfill the Law in this sense, as they alone, among the children of men have the power of the indwelling Spirit with a right motivated heart from which can flow acceptable thoughts, words and deeds. However, this only occurs as we “walk in the Spirit” and it is not designed to obtain our justification, but to obtain present blessings, growth in sanctification and future rewards.

## Law and Grace

When C.H. Spurgeon was asked, “*How do you reconcile the Law with Grace?*” he replied, “*You do not have to reconcile old friends.*”

Paul expressed Spurgeon’s sentiment exactly when he said:

*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the Law.* – Rom. 3:31

Is God the Author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33)? Paul says no. But God is the Author of both Law and Grace. If they are really opposed to each other then God would be the Author of confusion. The Law is called “*the law of God*” and grace is called “*the grace of God*.” God is the source of both. Is there a contradiction within God?

Confusion only occurs when man views and uses Law and grace contrary to God’s design for each.

God never designed the Law to regenerate, justify or sanctify anyone. That is not the purpose of God’s Law, but that is the purpose of God’s grace.

The law has two functions. One function is negative and the other is positive. The positive function of the law reveals the moral standard of God’s righteousness which is love. As a consequence of the positive function, the negative function of the law reveals and defines the nature of sin. This has been the design of God’s Law, and will continue to be the design of God’s Law for saved and lost.

However, in regard to satisfaction of the Law’s righteous demands for eternal life, and its eternal penal demands

against sinners, the believer is no longer “*under the law but under grace.*” Christ’s life has fully and eternally satisfied its righteous demands in behalf of the believer for justification of eternal life, and Christ’s death has fully, and eternally satisfied its eternal penalty against sinners. In regard to eternal consequences, we are “*dead*” to the law through “*the body of Christ.*”

*Know you not, brothers, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?*

*For the woman which has an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.*

*So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.*

*Why, my brothers, you also are become **dead to the law by the body of Christ**; that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God. –*

Rom. 7:1-4

Paul’s analogy is clear and simple. If a wife has an affair with some other man than her husband, she comes under the penal consequences of the law for adultery. However, if her husband dies she can marry another man without fear of the penalty. Death is what frees her from the penal consequences. The death of Christ has freed believers from all penal consequences of the Law due to their sins, because Christ paid for them in full by death in His own body. However, our freedom from penal consequences does not leave us in an unmarried state but brings us into



union with Christ so that we should “*bring forth fruit to God.*”

*To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.* – 1 Cor. 9:21

Nevertheless, with regard to the penal consequences of the Law we are “*dead*” to the Law.

Grace removes the believer out from under the condemnation of the Law. However, grace does not promote sin, rather it promotes righteousness.

Indeed, God designed the covenant of grace to regenerate, justify and sanctify sinners, or set them apart to be progressively conformed to the righteousness of God.

Paul said, “*As you received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him*” – Col. 2:6

How did we receive Christ? We received Christ “*by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, for it is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.*” – Eph. 2:8-9.

Therefore, we also walk by grace through faith in the indwelling power and work of the Holy Spirit. “*For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*” – Philip. 2:13

## The Holy Spirit and the Law

*That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* – Rom. 8:4

Some erroneously believe that God initially saves us and gives us His Spirit in order that we might be justified by keeping the Law through grace works. That is utterly false and is a complete repudiation of the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is only those already justified by faith that can perform good works acceptable to God. Furthermore it confuses God's design for justification with progressive sanctification. They are not the same and they have different designs.

The purpose of progressive sanctification is not our justification before the Law of God. The purpose of sanctification is the progressive growth and experience of salvation here and now, and future rewards and position in heaven.

The works of the saint are not judged to be justified for eternal life but for rewards in heaven (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

For example, sanctification here and now is not equal for every child of God. All born again persons are equally children, but all are not equal in sanctification (spiritual growth and fruit). All children of God are equally born again and equally justified by faith but not all are equally given the same measure of grace and faith for growth or usefulness by God (Rom. 12:4, 7).

More significantly, what all justified persons share in common is equal inability to obey the Law of God (Rom. 7:18; Gal. 5:16). The new birth changes their inclination but

does not change their inability of the will to perform righteousness (Rom. 7:18; Gal. 5:16). The power to perform righteousness is found only in the human will moved by the new inward man in yielding to the indwelling power of the Spirit of God:

*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.* – Philip. 2:13

It is God that both works it in (Philip. 2:12) as well as works it out (Philip. 2:13).

*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:...* - Jn. 6:63

The power to “put on” the desires of the new heart in the life of believers comes from the indwelling Spirit of God. It comes the very same way as they received the imputed righteousness of Christ for justification - as they received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith so must they walk by faith in His Spirit (Col. 2:6). They cannot claim credit for either.

When believers walk or live by the Spirit of God they are living in self-death, self-denial and yielding to the Spirit of God to work in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. They are mortifying the deeds of the flesh.

However, no human has the *“fullness of the Spirit”* to walk at all times *“in the Spirit.”* The only man who had the *“fullness of the Spirit”* was a sinless man – Jesus Christ. Christians are commanded to be *“filled with the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:18) and that would be a useless command if by virtue of being Christians they were always filled with the Spirit.

Whenever Christians are filled with the Spirit, those times of their lives are being redeemed/saved (Eph. 5:16) and

made to count for Christ, for time, and eternity, and thus saved in the form of rewards (1 Cor. 3:14-15). Those aspects of their lives glorify God. The aspects of their lives not under the control of the Spirit are lost forever and are wasted “*time*.”

Unlike justification by the Law, sanctification does not require a complete life of sinless obedience to God’s Law. It only requires that the external conformity to His Word originate from the new inward man by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, all thoughts, words and actions that are enabled by the Spirit of God flow from that new righteous heart are the products of “love” and “love is the fulfilling of the law.” God judges outward conformation to His written word by the motive of the heart.

This does not mean one can be sincere but disobedient to conform to the commands of God’s Word. It is not a matter of “spirit” versus “truth” or at the cost of truth but “spirit and truth.” The Holy Spirit enables only within the guidelines of truth, never in opposition to truth as He is not the Author of confusion.

Man is a threefold being (1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12) and salvation is found in three tenses (past, present, future) and three aspects (regeneration, sanctification, glorification) for the salvation of each aspect of human nature. Each of these tenses deals with an aspect of the human nature. Regeneration/new birth is the instantaneous change in the human spirit whereby that part of man is completely made perfect without sin (1 Jn. 3:9; Jn. 3:6). By the new birth, the Holy Spirit creates and cleanses an inner sanctuary to dwell within man (Eph. 2:10; 4:24; Col. 3:10; Tit. 3:5). This is past tense salvation.

From this internal sanctuary of the human spirit (Rom. 8:16) He progressively works upon the soul of man in order to change his life. This aspect of salvation is called progressive sanctification, and it is the present progressive tense of salvation. This work is never finished in this life. Good works are the evidences that this progressive work is being conducted within a person (Eph. 2:10; Philip. 2:12-13; James 2). Progressive sanctification produces maturity and victory over willful sin. However, progressive sanctification never gives victory over sins of omission (1 Jn. 1:8-10; Philip. 3:12-16) because of indwelling sin within us and because our sanctification is never brought to perfection in this life. The rate of change or rate of growth of the soul is ultimately determined by God's eternal purpose and time table for your life (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:11; 2:10b; Philip. 2:13b). However, this does not mean we are irresponsible in this matter, but rather, we are to yield to those means God has provided for our maturing process.

The last aspect of salvation is the future tense. This has to do with the third aspect of our nature or our body. At the resurrection prior to the judgment seat of Christ, we are raised incorruptible and indwelling sin or the law of indwelling corruptibility is forever removed from our bodies (1 Cor. 15:51-57; Rom. 7:24).

In the resurrection of the righteous, the whole man is united in a glorified state. Children of God are raised sinless and glorified before they stand before Christ to be judged "according to their works." This proves that they are not being judged for fitness to enter heaven by their works because they are already perfect prior to standing before Christ. They stand there to be rewarded and to be given positions in heaven, rather than to be judged for fitness for entrance into heaven.

Grace is always successful, as it is made effectual by God's power, according to God's purpose and timetable, but working in our own strength is never successful (Rom. 7:15-25) nor spiritual productive (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

Paul warns those who have begun by grace, but who now attempt to continue to finish by their own works (Gal. 3:1-3) that they will not find success in reverting back to their own works. He warns those who attempt to minister the "new" covenant by the "letter" or external means they will only minister "death" rather than "life" in their Christian experience. In other words, our administration of works usurps the Holy Spirit as the administrator of the Law of God. The result is a legalistic form of Christianity that chokes the life out of a person and a church. It is powerless and fruitless as it replaces the Holy Spirit as the administrator of the Law of God in the lives of God's people.

If holiness is the goal of a minister or church, it is important to recognize that the Holy Spirit is the administrator of this law within the new man, and not themselves or anyone else. He alone possesses the wisdom and power to impart and administer the law of God within man in such a way that the proper emphasis of the law (Mt. 23:23) is always maintained in any given situation. Only the Holy Spirit can achieve the ultimate goal of the Law (Mt. 7:12) in any given situation. All who take the law into their own hands, and attempt to administer it to themselves or to others are doomed to utter and complete failure, because they lack both the wisdom and power. Why? Because the law "*is spiritual*" (Rom. 7:14) but we are incapable of changing the internal nature of man.

Christians who recognize the spirituality factor of the Law will minister to others differently than those who do not

comprehend and yield to this truth. They will share the truth and teach the truth but will not use salesman pressure tactics to obtain the desired results in others. That is usurping the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The subtle difference in ministry is a matter of attitude toward self and others, and dependency and submission to the Holy Spirit. Ministering according to the flesh, by the letter, chokes the life out of a church. You must recognize that your teaching and preaching cannot change anyone, but it can offend, drive people away, and produce false professors when you minister in the power of the flesh. Even the preached gospel has no power to save apart from the Holy Spirit:

*For our gospel came not to you **in word only**, but in power and in the Holy Spirit.... – 1 Thes. 1:5*

Your presence, personality and ministry are empty and void whenever you minister in the flesh. When you use the pressure of your personality, emotional gimmicks and other devices to move people to do what you think they should do, you are usurping the administration of the Holy Spirit. Change is the Holy Spirit's business while submission to His leadership is our business. Our assignment is to share the truth in a spirit of humility and love while leaving the consequences to the Holy Spirit. He is the administrator of the law within His people. When there is a ministration of love and unconditional dependency upon the Holy Spirit to administer the Law of God, there is "liberty" and "life" and "change" (2 Cor. 3:6, 17-18).

Legalism is a combination of two aspects. (1) Internal critical spirit toward self and others;(2) External pressures – projected by looks, attitude, actions – to conform others

to what you believe they should be when you believe they should.



## Does Grace Promote Sin?

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid..... for **you are not under the law, but under grace.** What then? shall we sin, because **we are not under the law, but under grace?** God forbid. – Rom. 6:1,2, 14,15*

Because we are justified by faith in a righteousness found in the Person and works of Christ, rather than in our own person and works, does that mean we continue in sin just as we did before we were justified?

Some at Rome made this charge against Paul for denying the believer was no longer under the law but under grace.

However, what they did not understand was that all who are justified by grace also have been regenerated by grace. Although justification is not regeneration, yet they are inseparable in the initial work of salvation.

The former (justification) provides a right position before the Law of God in heaven while the latter (regeneration) provides a right nature with fruits within the one having been justified.

Prior to regeneration the totality of our human nature was at “*enmity with God and not subject to the law of God*” (Rom. 8:7) but after the new birth we have been given a new additional nature that “*delights in the law of God after the inward man*” (Rom. 7:21) and is inclined to submit to the Law of God (Rom. 7:18-25).

The justified man has two laws at work within him (Rom. 7:25; Gal. 5:16) one that hates the Law, and the other that delights in the law, and this contradiction is manifested in life by “good” and “bad” works. However, the lost man cannot do any righteousness in the sight of God (Rom. 3:10-11; Rom. 8:7-8). The law of indwelling sin works through the appetites of his flesh to war against his soul that is inclined to the appetites of his regenerated spirit or “inward man” (Rom. 7:18-21). He has no more will power to overcome sin after he is justified any more than before he was justified, but he has the inclination to overcome it (Rom. 7:18-25) as opposed to enmity and resistance before he was born again (Rom. 8:7-8).

The power to overcome sin lies solely with the indwelling Spirit of God rather than the believers own will or renewed nature (Rom. 8:4). He overcomes indwelling sin exactly as he was justified. He must stop trying and yield to the indwelling Holy Spirit for victory over indwelling sin.

However, sanctification by the Spirit is progressive and incomplete until the day of glorification. Therefore, the justified man cannot measure up to the Law’s standard for justification after regeneration any better than before regeneration. So justification by the law cannot be attained, maintained or obtained by Christians. Christ in his own life and Person has already satisfied the Law in behalf of the justified, so that is not the goal of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The goal of the indwelling Spirit is to work “*in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philip. 2:13) in order to achieve God’s purpose for us in this life which differs from one saved person to another.

Children of God differ in their measure of sanctification (growth and Christ-likeness) and fruit but none reach equal or perfect sanctification in this life. We are all being

changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of God but not all are being changed at the same rate or reach the same extent, and none reach perfect sanctification in this life.

All sin, past, present and future was paid in full by Christ on the cross, and has been charged to Christ on the cross so that we are legally “*dead*” to the law’s condemnation (Rom. 7:1-5). However, the very sins that Christ paid for do occur in our lives, and God uses them as abrasives to our new nature to help us learn, mold and conform and advance in our spiritual growth.

No, grace does not promote sin. Neither does grace obtain sinlessness. Moreover, our sins are dealt with, as a Father deals with erring children. He does not allow any of his children to get away with sin but chastens them (Heb. 12:5-10), and uses the sin to advance us in our spiritual growth.

## The Covenants in the Book of Hebrews

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of **the everlasting covenant**, - Heb. 13:20*

*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that **first covenant** had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for **the second**. – Heb. 8:6-7*

There are three types of covenants mentioned in the book of Hebrews:

1. The Everlasting Covenant
2. The Old Covenant
3. The New Covenant

### A. The Everlasting Covenant

The “everlasting Covenant” is the **personal** direct redemptive unconditional covenant that God covenanted between the Divine Persons of the Godhead in respect to each of His elect in all ages. (before Moses, during Moses and after Moses).

For example, David, lived under the “old” covenant but yet God made with David the everlasting covenant or what later Prophets called “the sure mercies of David”:

*Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me **an everlasting covenant**, ordered*

*in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation,  
and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*

– 2 Sam. 23:5<sup>13</sup>

Isaiah speaking to Israel unto whom the “old” covenant had already been established as a nation addresses the **individual** and says:

*Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make **an everlasting covenant with you**, even the sure mercies of David.* – Isa. 55:3

Any covenant requires two or more parties with covenant obligations to fulfill. This covenant is “everlasting” and was made between the Three Persons of the Godhead before the world began wherein each of these Three Divine Persons committed themselves to fulfill a covenant obligation in regard to an elect people (Eph. 1:4-14; Rom. 8:28-39; 2 Tim. 1:9; etc.). The Father entered into the obligation of choosing and giving a people for His Son to redeem (Eph. 1:4; 1 Thes. 1:4; Jn. 6:37-39; 44-45). The Son entered into the covenant obligation to provide a complete propitiation/satisfaction/redemption for those the Father gave him (Jn. 17:2; Eph. 1:5-11) and the Holy Spirit took upon the obligation apply this redemptive work to those given by the Father to the Son (Eph. 1:12-14).

There is no salvation outside of Christ for any human being between Genesis 1 and Revelation 22. The gospel of the everlasting covenant is the same gospel preached by all the prophets prior to the first coming of Christ:

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<sup>13</sup> “*although my house be not so with God*” is a confession that he was not without sin. The expression “*although he make it not to grow*” refers to the present full manifestation. Nevertheless, the seed had been planted even though “all things” promised had not yet been made manifest.

*To him give **all the prophets witness**, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. – Acts 10:43*

*For **unto us** was the gospel preached, **as well as unto them**: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. – Heb. 4:2*

*Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, **saying none other things** than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. – Acts 26:22-23*

There has been only one way to heaven prior to the cross (Mt. 7:13-14) and it is the very same way after the cross (Acts 4:12) and that is through Christ (Jn. 14:6).

The undeniable proof that this very same gospel with the very same way of salvation, and very same redeemer for personal individual salvation in all ages is the use of Abraham, as the pattern for all who believe. Abraham lived 430 years before Moses and thus before the cross and yet Paul sets him forth as the father of all who are justified by faith in all ages (Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:6-8).

## **B. The Old and New Public Administrated Covenants**

In contrast with the “everlasting” covenant, both the Old and New Covenants are public administrations of the everlasting covenant. The Old Covenant administers the

everlasting covenant by types that anticipate the first coming of Christ with emphasis upon the holiness of God.

This typology is administered through a public institutional “house of God” by a qualified ministry who administer qualified public ordinances:

*Then verily the first covenant had **also** ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.* – Heb. 9:1

The covenant administration under Moses had a **public** house of God with **public** priesthood, **public** ordinances, **public** sacrifices, **public** Messianic feasts, and **public** ceremonial Sabbaths. These were all public and institutional.

The former **public** covenant is called “*old*” because it preceded another **public** and **institutional** covenant administration under Christ that “also” had a **public** house of God (1 Tim. 3:15), and a **public** ministry (1 Tim. 3:1-13) and **public** ordinances, and a **public** day of worship (Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10).

The contrast between the “old” and “new” is not the way of personal salvation by the “everlasting” covenant, although there are many other differences. The “old” covenant was designed to anticipate the First Coming of Christ while the “new” covenant is designed to anticipate the Second Coming. Thus the establishment of the “new” Covenant with its institutional “house of God” with ordinances and ministry that anticipate the Second Coming automatically invalidate the former “old” covenant (Col. 2:14-16) which found its administrative fulfillment in the First Coming of Christ.

Another significant difference is that the “old” covenant in its public administration required only typical external

conformation to the truths of the “everlasting” covenant by those who ministered it, as well as those being ministered unto. It was all a matter of external form. As long as the Levities met the external character of the qualifications they could serve in the priesthood even though internally/spiritually they did not conform to those qualifications. Those who partook of the administrations were required to externally conform to truths symbolized by the ordinances. Therefore, if a person was externally circumcised in the flesh they were qualified to be recognized as the professing people of God. However, the external requirements were designed by God to instruct them and lead them to see the need of internal and spiritual conformity to the external signs and personal faith in Christ. Those among the “old” covenant participants who had a personal internal relationship with Christ through faith in the gospel were not only of external Israel but of spiritual Israel (Rom. 9:6).

The “new” covenant differs from the “old” in that it requires personal profession of internal/spiritual conformity to its ordinances prior to entering into its public institutional ministry or partaking of its service in its public “house of God.” Thus the “new” covenant administration is declarative of the “everlasting” covenant through its personal profession and service.

The baptism in the Spirit with a commission are both institutional in character and have nothing to do with the “everlasting” covenant or personal salvation. For example, every “house of God” upon being built and commissioned has been baptized in the Spirit (Ex. 40:35; 2 Chron. 7:1-3; Acts 2:1-3). The initial evidence of the baptism in Spirit is supernatural signs and wonders, whereas the more permanent abiding evidence is that it is the pillar and ground of “the truth.” In the baptism of the Spirit the “fire”



that was kindled upon the sacrificial altar which was never allowed to go out. This abiding sign manifests the perpetuity of the House of God.

The “old” and “new” public covenant administrations are characterized by the “keys of the kingdom.” The former administration of the keys of the kingdom was Israel through its ordained ministry (Mt. 22:44) whereas, the administer of the keys of the kingdom under the new covenant administration is the New Testament congregation with its ordained ministry (Mt. 16:18-19; 18:15-18).

The new covenant **public** administration has a new house of God, new ordinances, new sacrifices, new ordained ministry, new Sabbath, designed for service by people who have the Law of God written on their hearts and who operate out of a spirit of love rather than fear, duty and external pressures. Moreover, the “new” covenant administration clearly presents the gospel of the “*blood of the everlasting gospel*” in more direct simple terms than under the more complicated burdensome types and sacrifices of the “old” covenant administration.

## Salvation versus Sacramentalism

There are those who lived before and after the cross, who believed and taught that personal justification can be achieved through public covenant administrations (“old” and “new”).

This is the idea that personal salvation is ultimately achieved through external public administration of the covenant ordinances by the covenant institution. The Pharisees of Christ’s day taught this and Roman Catholicism teaches this today.

This is the type that attempts to achieve an *internal spiritual* condition by or through *external* means and/or by human will power. It has always been and always will be a dismal failure due to the weakness “*of the flesh*” – Rom. 8:3

Personal salvation has always been obtained solely by the internal administration of the Holy Spirit in connection with **personal** faith in “*the blood of the everlasting covenant*” (Heb. 13:20; Acts 10:43; Heb. 4:2; Rom. 3:24-26).

It is obtained the very same way today, as it was in day of Abraham before either of these public institutional covenant administrations existed. It was obtained this way from the garden of Eden unto Abraham, and from Abraham to the last human saved on planet earth. There has been, and there is no other way but one way (Mt.7:13-14; Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12; Heb. 4:2; Acts 10:43; Gal. 1:8-9; 3:6-8).

Justification is obtained prior to, and thus without any external ordinances, as in the case of Abraham (Rom. 4:9-11). Paul makes it clear that justification before God (the blessing of remission of sins and imputed righteousness –

vv. 6-8) was obtained for Abraham when he was “*in uncircumcision*” by faith alone.

*Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? **Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.** – Rom. 4:9-10*

The phrase “*in circumcision*” refers to that aspect of his life beginning with circumcision until he died. He had already obtained the blessings of justification by faith (remission of sins; imparted righteousness – vv. 6-8) between his birth and circumcision or when he was “*not in circumcision.*” Circumcision occurred years later and provided only a visible “*sign*” or an external “*seal*” or testimony that he had already been justified:

*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness **of the faith** which **he had yet being uncircumcised:** that he might be the father of all them that believe, **though they be not circumcised;** that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: - Rom. 4:11*

Significantly, the Roman Catholic Catechism fully admits that circumcision under the Old Covenant corresponds with baptism under the new covenant as a sacramental ordinance.

*CIRCUMCISION: The rite prescribed in Judaism....was a sign of the covenant between God and His people Israel and prefigured the rite of Christian Baptism.... - **Catechism of the Catholic***

Church, Second Edition, p. 871

*527 Jesus' circumcision on the eighth day after his birth....This sign prefigures that "circumcision of Christ" which is Baptism. Ibid. p. 133*

Therefore, to understand the relationship of circumcision to the Old Testament believer is to understand the relationship of Baptism to the New Testament believer according to Catholic dogma.

Thus, simply replace the words "circumcision" or "circumcise" with the words "baptized" or "baptism" in Paul's treatise in Romans 4:9-13 and you have this clear and explicit view of baptism in the mind of Paul. I have replaced the words for circumcision with the words of baptism in the following quotation to merely illustrate my point:

¶ Cometh this blessedness then upon the **baptized** only, or upon the **unbaptized** also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was **in baptism**, or **in unbaptism**? Not **in baptism**, but in **unbaptism**.

And he received the sign of **baptism**, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being **unbaptized**: that he might be the **father** of all them that believe, though they be not **baptized**; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of **baptism** to them who are not of the **baptized** only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet **unbaptized**. – Rom. 4:9-12

Hence, baptism like circumcision is but a "sign" or "figure" and as a sign and figure it provides an external "seal" or confirmation of justification that was received while IN UNBAPTISM.

Jesus taught the very same thing in Luke 5:12-14. The leper was cleansed immediately at the word spoken by Christ. However, he was told to go and show himself to the Priests according to the Law of Moses for ceremonial cleansing. He did not submit to *external* ordinances to be **literally** cleansed but to be **ceremonially** cleansed "**for a testimony**" to them:

*And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

*And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And **immediately the leprosy departed from him.***

*And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and **offer for thy cleansing,** according as Moses commanded, **for a testimony unto them.** – Lk. 5:12-14*

He did not go in order to be ("**for thy cleansing**") cleansed literally through submission to external rites and ordinances but to provide a public testimony because he already had been literally cleansed. The ceremonial rites were only visible symbols of cleansing rather than means to literally convey or obtain actual cleansing.

Baptism does save, it does remit sins, but not literally only figuratively and externally (1 Pet. 3:21 "**the like FIGURE whereunto baptism doth also now save us...**"). It is the "**answer**" of a conscience already "**good.**" The conscience is made "good" by being purged by faith in the

blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14) and therefore baptism can only be an external response or figurative.

Therefore, under the “old” public covenant administration, as well as under the “new” public covenant administration, there is no literal salvation (justification, remission of sins, imputed righteousness) obtained by or through external rites or ordinances. The public covenant administrative ordinances are “signs” or “symbols” to convey a public testimony that literally cleansing has already been obtained by faith in Christ:

*To him give all the prophets witness that whosoever believeth upon his name **shall receive remission of sins** – Acts 10:43*

Abraham, who lived prior to either public covenant administration (old or new) is the biblical example of personal salvation to all who are of faith (Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:6-7).

## The Earliest Baptist Confessions on the Law:

### A. The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith:

#### *Chapter 19: Of the Law of God*

1. *God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it. (Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10, 12 )*

2. *The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables, the four first containing our duty towards God, and the other six, our duty to man. ( Romans 2:14, 15; Deuteronomy 10:4 )*

3. *Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties, all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the*

*true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end abrogated and taken away. (Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Colossians 2:14, 16, 17; Ephesians 2:14, 16 )*

*4. To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution; their general equity only being of moral use. ( 1 Corinthians 9:8-10 )*

*5. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it; neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation. ( Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8, 10-12; James 2:10, 11; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31 )*

*6. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned, yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against, sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience; it is likewise of use to the regenerate to restrain their*



*corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse and unallayed rigour thereof. The promises of it likewise shew them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, though not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works; so as man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law and not under grace.(Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16; Romans 8:1; Romans 10:4; Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7, etc; Romans 6:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8-13 )*

*7. Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done. ( Galatians 3:21; Ezekiel 36:27).*

## **B. The Newhampshire Confession of Faith – 1833**

*We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them*

*from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church*

## CHAPTER TWO

# Understanding the Sabbath

*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.* – Gen. 2:3

The creation Sabbath was “*blessed*” and “*sanctified*” (or “set apart” by God). The Hebrew term translated “Sabbath” does not mean “seven” but means “rest.” There is no mention of ceremonial restrictions in connection with the Creation Sabbath. The Creation Sabbath is not subject to the ceremonial laws found under the Old Covenant administration of the Sabbath. . The thesis of this book is that the Creation Sabbath is restored under the New Covenant administration without the ceremonial restrictions found under the Old Covenant Administration of the Sabbath. The New Covenant administration of the Sabbath finds its completion in a new heaven and earth that God will look upon and again says “very good.”<sup>14</sup>

Jesus claims to be the Creator of the Sabbath or “*Lord of the Sabbath*” and he said the Sabbath was “*made for man*” or mankind – Mk. 2:26. This denies that the Sabbath was merely set apart just for God or just for Jews. There were no Jews when the Sabbath was made. Hence, the Creation Sabbath was made for mankind in general and will find its ultimate fulfillment in a new heaven and earth and a redeemed humanity.

Under the Old Covenant, Israel is commanded to remember the Sabbath for two separate distinct reasons. When the Ten Commandments was first given to Moses in

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<sup>14</sup> The Old Covenant administration of the Sabbath will find its fulfillment under the restoration of the kingdom to Israel during the seventh millennium.

Exodus, the stated reason is that it is to remind them of God's original creation produced by God in seven literal twenty-four hour days (Ex. 20:4-5). When the Ten Commandments were given again to Moses the second time in Deuteronomy ("deuter" = two, "onomy" = Law), the stated reason is that they should remember God's redemptive work in saving them from Egypt. Hence, under the Old Covenant, the Sabbath is identified with, and in remembrance of a sinless creation and a type of redemption.

These two stated reasons are of great significance for properly understanding the Creation Sabbath and its final fulfillment under the New Covenant.

In Genesis, God produced a sinless creation that He could look upon and pronounce "very good." It was "very good" because there was no presence of sin, and all of creation, including man was at peace with God. This was something rebellious Israel in the wilderness needed reminding. Original sinless creation shortly fell into the ravages of sin and peace between God and man ceased. This was the condition of Israel in the wilderness and throughout their history until they are redeemed as a nation at the coming of Christ (Rom. 11:25-28).

In Exodus God provided a type of redemption through the blood of a sacrificial Lamb. Redemption by the lamb's blood is a type of redeeming this sin cursed creation back to a sinless condition under the New Covenant, which will be manifested fully and completely in the "new heaven and new earth" yet to come (Rev. 21:1).

Therefore the Old Covenant Sabbath is designed by God to commemorate the creative and redemptive work of God. The former (creation) being a sinless creation and the latter

being a restoration to a sinless condition (redemption). The Old Covenant ceremonial Administration of the Sabbath stands between the creation Sabbath and its ultimate fulfillment under the New Covenant in the new heaven and earth. The Old Covenant administration provided the type but the New Covenant administration provides the fulfillment of the Creation Sabbath.

The gospel was preached before and after the cross (Heb. 4:2) and is directly connected to the creation Sabbath by Paul in Hebrews 4:2-4. Saints in all ages entered into *spiritual* rest by the gospel (Heb. 4:2) through faith in the blood of the everlasting covenant (Acts 10:43; Heb. 13:20). However, there is a greater and fuller rest yet to come (Heb. 4:11) beyond this present creation, that we must enter, not merely in spirit, but in soul and body. Until we enter into that rest, in its fullness, there remains a better Sabbath day observance for the people of God (Heb. 4:9) than found under the Old Covenant administration. This better Sabbath observance under the New Covenant commemorates the finished work of Christ (Heb. 4:10). The Creation Sabbath has not yet been fulfilled until God again can look upon a total creation with a fully redeemed human population and pronounce “very good.” This new creation does not occur in the seventh millennium (of which the Old Covenant Sabbath finds fulfillment for Israel), but in the eighth and eternal millennium where the New Covenant Sabbath is fulfilled. Hence, there is a better Sabbath day than the Old Covenant Sabbath that commemorates the finished work of Christ.

## The Sabbath Preceded Sinai

The fourth commandment begins with the admonition to “*remember*.”

If you will “*remember*” before the Ten Commandments were given to Israel at Mount Sinai, that Exodus chapter sixteen contains a rebuke by God against Israel for violating His Sabbath:

*“And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field.*

*26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.*

*27 And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28 And the LORD said unto Moses, how long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws.” – Ex. 16:28*

This rebuke proves that the moral law or Ten Commandments existed previous to being inscribed on stone, and previous to giving of the “old” covenant at Mount Sinai. The Bible reader can find the violation of every single one of the Ten Commandments between Genesis 3 and Exodus 20. Remember to violate one point in the Ten Commandments is to violate every point:

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

*For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. – Jam. 2:10-11*

If you will “*remember*” Jacob observed the time division of weeks long before Exodus 16 (Gen. 29:27).

If you will “*remember*” Noah sent out his birds every seventh day (Gen. 8:10-11) long before the time of Jacob.

If you will “*remember*” Cain and Abel came before the Lord with their offerings at “*the end of days*” within the week division of time.

Archeology has shown that every ancient culture observed the time division of a week and had one day set aside as a Sabbath day of worship for their gods. Ancient Egypt at the time of the Exodus observed Friday as their Sabbath.

Therefore, as our memory traces Sabbath observance from Exodus 20 back through Biblical history it does indeed bring us to Genesis 2:2-3 and the establishment of the original Sabbath by God. It brings us back to a sinless creation and sinless humanity at rest, and in complete harmony with God. That is what God wanted Israel to “*remember*” when they considered the Sabbath day.

He did not want them to remember the Sabbath in connection with merely the Jews or the nation of Israel, but in connection with generic humanity in a sinless creation at rest, in complete harmony with God. If you do not grasp this truth you will completely fail to grasp the true meaning of the Sabbath, as the Sabbath was “*made for man*” as a reminder of a sinless creation rather than for a sinful nation of Israel.

## The Sabbath in Christ's Day

The Sabbath day in the time of Christ was the Sabbath under the Old Covenant Administration. Jesus came to institute the New Covenant Administration.

The Scribes and Pharisees constantly charged Christ with violating God's Sabbath. Now, either Christ violated God's Sabbath Law or he violated the current Jewish interpretation of the Old Covenant administration of the Sabbath Law. Some believe that Christ actually violated the fourth commandment of God. If that is true, then Christ sinned, as sin is the violation of God's Law, and if he violated God's law, he is unfit to be our Savior.

The current Jewish understanding of the Sabbath in the day of Christ was provided by the traditions of the elders rather than by the Scriptures. Jesus constantly rebuked and corrected their understanding of the Sabbath, as well as the other Ten Commandments.

They misinterpreted God's restriction of work on the Sabbath. God never restricted all manner of work on the Sabbath (Isa. 58:12-13). Jesus told the Jews it is "*lawful*" to do good on the Sabbath.

*How much then is a man better than a sheep?  
Wherefore **it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days**.*- Mt. 12:12

Jesus told the Jews that the Father works on the Sabbath and so did he, and all who minister in the house of God.

*And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, **because he had done these things on the sabbath day.***



***But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.***- Jn. 5:16-17

He told them that the Sabbath was made “*for man*” not man for the Sabbath. Meaning it was designed to be a blessing not a hardship on man.

***And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:*** - Mk. 2:27

Therefore, the Sabbath laws violated by Christ were not God’s laws but the “traditions” of the elders.

However, the precise day on which Christ observed the Sabbath was the seventh day “of the week.” In our next chapter we will discuss the phrase “of the week” in contrast to its relationship with the Creational Sabbath.

## Interpreting the Sabbath Law

What is the moral significance of the fourth commandment? How should this law be understood and applied?

### 1. The Morality of the Sabbath:

There is nothing inherently moral about a twenty-four hour period of time above any other twenty-four hour period. Time has no moral value or attributes.

Morality is derived from a moral precept. The morality of the Sabbath is solely founded upon God's arbitrary selection of a designated portion of time to be observed as a Sabbath. The morality is that God has commanded it. To disobey God's command is to sin against Him, and therein is the morality of the Sabbath found. Additionally, the morality may be also found in the intended design for keeping the Sabbath holy. For example, if the Sabbath is designed by God to commemorate a sinless creation and a redemption obtained "*without works*" by men, then to work upon the Sabbath would be to violate this moral principle in regard to its design.

God can just as easily select, and identify any portion of time to be observed as a Sabbath, and that selected time would be a moral obligation. Indeed, it will be shown that God has arbitrarily selected and applied Sabbath Law to many other days and other periods of time, in addition to a twenty-four hour period. In each case, such days also were designed to commemorate the finished redemptive work of Christ obtained "without works" by men.

## 2. The Seventh day “of the week”?

Moreover, the phrase “**of the week**” is never found in any scripture containing the Sabbath law or any scripture describing the creation Sabbath. What we find in Genesis is seven days in numerical order, but that whole period is never once called a “**week**.” Nor is the “seventh day” of creation ever once described as the seventh day “**of the week**.” Nowhere does God tie these seven numerical days to any human calendar. Indeed, no Jewish calendar is divided into 28 day periods or any Jewish calendar year divided into days divisible by seven. Even the Jewish calendar had 29 to 30 days in some of its months God did not make our solar system to produce time periods divisible by seven. Hence, the six days preceding the seventh day Sabbath is purely an arbitrary Law of God in view of a purposed divine design.

It is true that any practical application of this creation seven day consecutive principle requires a repeatable seven day pattern, and is therefore responsible for the basis of our month divided into “weeks.”

However, it is important to realize that our calendars are the consequence rather than the cause of this seven day pattern. God never established our calendars as the rule for obedience, but our calendars were established by men to apply this seven day principle into their culture. This means, that God’s application of the Sabbath is not restricted to our calendars, but our calendars are a response to applying His Law to our culture. However, His law did not say the Sabbath is to be observed on the seventh day “of the week.” Nor does His command state the Sabbath is Saturday or any other day found in our calendar. He may choose to apply this seven day pattern

anywhere, at any time He pleases, regardless how it fits within our calendar.

For example, if God wanted the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath, **He could merely designate it as such, and the first day of the week would be preceded by six working days making it the seventh day Sabbath in that pattern of seven numerical days.** What this means is, that all that is required by the fourth commandment is a pattern of six working days followed by the seventh Sabbath day, regardless of our human calendar, as God can apply it at any point in our calendar without any change to the moral principle. The only change is our response to the command and our application of it within our calendar system. Shortly, we will see that God has already applied the Sabbath law contrary to the Jewish weekly calendar division.

### **3. The Hebrew term “Yom” and its Sabbath Applications:**

The designated Sabbath time is one seventh in seven parts of equal portions of time. The word used to designate the seventh portion is the Hebrew term “yom.” However, the Creation Sabbath is in connection with two different uses of the Hebrew term “yom.” Both are used in the Creation period. The Hebrew term “yom” describes seven equal but individual 24 hour periods in which God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 2:3).

*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.- Gen. 2:3*

However, it is also used to describe the whole period in which He created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 2:4).

*These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in **the day** that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, - Gen. 2:4.*

Therefore, the term “yom” may include longer periods of time than a 24 hour “yom.”

Some may object and claim that God does not require a longer period Sabbath, but only a 24 hour period Sabbath. However, God did require longer Sabbath periods of rest for Israel (Lev. 23-25 “day” “month” and “year” Sabbaths). These applications of Sabbath Law to greater periods than a 24 hour day are founded upon this second use of “yom” in Genesis 2:4.

Therefore, the Hebrew term “*day*” in connection with the Creation Sabbath embraces not merely the seven individual 24 hour periods but the whole seven day period as “*the day*” in which God created the heavens and the earth. **This lays the foundation for God applying the Sabbath law to longer periods of time than a twenty-four hour “yom”** (as in Leviticus 23-25).

#### 4. The Proper Application of the Sabbath Law

Any practical application of a repeated 24 hour Sabbath that follows and precedes six working days would require some kind of consistent application within any human calendar. However, the designation of that day in the calendar month would depend upon how any culture named the days in their month. The Jews simply used

numerical days for their month. When referring to these days in regard to the Sabbath they would designate them numerically in relationship to the Sabbath day. Hence “the first day of the week” literally translates the Greek phrase that means “the first of Sabbaths” or the first day occurring after the Sabbath day. Likewise, the second of Sabbaths, and third, fourth, etc. Hence, not even in Jewish reckoning did they use the words “of the week.”

Pagan cultures identified their days by the names of their pagan gods. Pagans worshipped mythical gods and planets. For example “Saturday” comes from the worship of Saturn and “Thursday” comes from the worship of “Thor” the god of thunder.

Saturdarians believe that from Genesis chapter one, God preserved the habitual observation of the Seventh day through the line of Seth right up to Moses and even into the New Testament.

Although this belief cannot be proven, there is no reason to dispute that belief. The issue is not concerned with what day the Sabbath occurred from Creation to Christ, but whether or not God restricted the Sabbath law to that particular day. Saturdarians demand the Sabbath law is inherently restricted in its application to the seventh day “of the week” or Saturday. However, as we shall shortly see, that idea is simply wrong.

## The Logic of Saturdarian Sabbath Keepers

Saturdarians (Saturday Sabbath keepers) admit that the phrase “*of the week*” cannot be found in any account of the Creation days or the fourth commandment.

They defend their position by a series of logical deductions based upon supposed necessary inferences. Their reasoning goes like this – Since our week is based upon the seven days of creation, and since the seventh day of creation is the Sabbath, therefore the seventh day ***of the week*** is the Sabbath. Since Saturday was the day being kept as the Sabbath by the Jews in the day of Christ therefore, the Seventh day is Saturday. Hence, no one has the right to change Saturday from being God’s Sabbath.

Let’s suppose this reasoning is true. However, the calendar division is not the law of God, but a human response to incorporate the Sabbath into our calendar of events. The Law does not say “Saturday” or any other day in our calendar is the Sabbath. The Law does not say the seventh day “of the week” is the Sabbath. The law only says the “seventh day” following six working days is the Sabbath.

Furthermore, our calendar application does not restrict God from applying it anywhere at any time within our calendar, just as long as there are six working days preceding and following the Seventh day Sabbath.

Therefore, it is not wrong for pre-Mosaic people of God to apply it to a consistent fixed repetitive day, or for the Jews under the Old Covenant to apply it to a fixed particular day “*of the week*” such as Saturday. Indeed, it is very logical that some day of the week be regularly

observed as the Sabbath. This is consistent and keeping within the framework of the Sabbath law.

However, it is quite another thing to demand that Saturday observation is morally inherent in the Sabbath Law rather than just a mere consequential application of the Sabbath Law. If Saturday observance is morally inherent in the Sabbath Law then no other application of this Law is permissible. If that were true, then it could not be applied to other days or greater period of times than a twenty-four hour period.

However, that is not true, as God applies the Sabbath law to many other days other than the seventh day “of the week” and it is applied to several other periods of time than a twenty four hour day (Lev. 23-25). Hence, Saturday is not inherent in the Sabbath Law but merely an application of that Law to the human calendar. God can, and does arbitrarily apply the Sabbath law to other days and other periods of time, as will be proven shortly.

Therefore the interpretation of Saturdarians cannot be right, as God applies the Sabbath Law wider in application than permitted by Saturdarians. If God can apply the Sabbath Law under Moses to more than the seventh day “of the week” it proves that Saturday is not inherent in the Sabbath Law and that the Sabbath Law is wider in principle and in application than permitted by Saturdarians.

**Hence, the Saturdarian error is that they restrict the Sabbath Law to something narrower than God’s own application of it. Any interpretation that forbids God’s own application of a Law must be wrong.**

## **1. Sabbath days are “holy Convocations”**



The Sabbath Law involves both an appointed time and an appointed observance of that time. The appointed observance is “*ye shall do no work therein*” but is a rest day from such work.

*Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.* – Lev. 23:3

The phrase “*an holy convocation*” stands in apposition to “the Sabbath of rest.” It is a further description of what God means by “rest.” He means “*ye shall do no work therein.*” That is “*an holy convocation.*” This is an expression for the Sabbath law of observation. Only in Leviticus 23 do we find this descriptive phrase “*an holy convocation*” and we find it first in connection with observance of the Sabbath Law.

Hence, “*the Sabbath rest*” is defined as “*an holy convocation*” or a day “*ye shall do no work therein, it is the Sabbath of the Lord.*” Hence, right at the beginning of this chapter God defines what is a “*holy convocation.*” It is Sabbath law applied to a given day that makes it a day of rest from work.

## 2. Various Sabbath Days

Throughout Leviticus 23 this phrase is applied to various fixed day Sabbaths that do not occur on the seventh day “of the week.”

7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work

**therein.** 8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day **is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.**

21 And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be **an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein:** it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have **a sabbath,** a memorial of blowing of trumpets, **an holy convocation....**<sup>30</sup> And **whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day,** the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

31 **Ye shall do no manner of work:** it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

32 **It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest,** and ye shall afflict your souls: **in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.**

35 On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the **eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you;** and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and **ye shall do no servile work therein**

39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye

*shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath.*

Lev. 24:4 *But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.  
5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.*

In Leviticus chapter 23 the words "*it is an holy convocation*" is synonymous with "*it is a Sabbath*" having reference to the Sabbath Law. Indeed, the description "*holy convocation*" is only found in Leviticus 23 and is not only descriptive of the weekly Sabbath (Lev. 23:3) but "*the first day*" in the month (vv. 7, 24, 35, 39) and the "*ninth day*" (v. 32) and in the "*eighth day*" (v. 36). Furthermore, as will be seen later the Sabbath law is applied to the "*tenth day*" of the seventh month and several times to the "fifteenth day."

## The Feast Sabbaths – Lev. 23-25

In Leviticus 23-25 God applies the Sabbath law to various other days, and to other periods of time (month, weeks, years) other than the “seventh” day. These are all “high” or special Sabbaths.

Indeed, in the Feasts of Leviticus 23-25 the seven day creational pattern is applied differently so that the Sabbath day does not always occur on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Instead the Sabbath falls on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22 of the month.

### 1. Feast of Unleavened Bread – Lev. 23:6-7

*And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to the LORD: seven days you must eat unleavened bread.*

*In the first day you shall have an holy convocation: you shall do no servile work therein, in the seventh day is an holy convocation: you shall do no servile work therein.*

Here is a pattern of seven days beginning on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month where the first and seventh day are both equally observed as Sabbaths. Regardless, of what day of their week these days may have fallen on, there is a pattern of seven where the first day of this pattern was a Sabbath equally as the seventh day of this pattern. Therefore, in this pattern of seven, the day of rest falls on the days of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of the month.

## **2. Feast of Pentecost** – Lev. 23:15-16,21

*And you shall count to you from **the morrow after the sabbath**, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths** shall be complete:*

***Even to the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall you number fifty days**; and you shall offer a new meat offering to the LORD..... And you shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that **it may be an holy convocation to you: you shall do no servile work therein**: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.*

The Pharisees and Sadducees argued over the exact beginning point of the seven Sabbatical weeks of Pentecost and the same argument rages today. The Pharisees argued that it began with a dated special Sabbath that fell on the same date every year, but not upon the same day of the week. According to this argument the seven Sabbaths are all “high” or special Sabbaths rather than the regularly weekly Sabbath.

On the other hand, the Sadducees argued that the counting of seven Sabbaths began with the first day of the week after the first regular Sabbath that followed the first day of unleavened bread. This first day of the week was when the “firstfruits” were offered unto God, whereas the heave offering was offered on the 50<sup>th</sup> day or the first day of the week following the seventh regular weekly Sabbath. During the time of Christ it was the position of the Sadducees that was practiced, as they were the majority in the Sanhedrin.

Moreover, the interpretation of the Sadducees harmonizes with the parallel pattern of the seven times seven yearly Sabbaths of forty-nine years followed by the fiftieth Jubilee Sabbath year (Lev. 25:8-10).

The first day of the week is the preeminent Sabbath at the beginning and at the closure of the feast of Pentecost. The first fruit offering occurs on the first day of the week at the beginning and the heave offering occurs on the first day of the week or the day of Pentecost. This harmonizes with Christ the first fruit of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23) which occurred on the first day of the week (Lk. 24:1,7,13,21; Mark 16:9; Jn. 20:1) and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1).

*But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. – 1 Cor. 15:22*

*Now when **Jesus was risen early the first day of the week**, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. – Mk. 16:9*

### **3. Seventh Month** – Lev. 23:24-25

*Speak to the children of Israel, saying, In **the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall you have a sabbath**, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.*

*You shall do no servile work therein: but you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.*

The seventh month was unique in Israel. The Jews had two calendars. They had their religious calendar of events where the seventh month began with a Sabbath on the first day of the month. Also, they had a civil calendar that

began with the seventh month as the first month in the civil year calendar.

What is interesting is that the overlapping of both calendars meant that the same month was both the seventh in one calendar, as well as, the first month in the other calendar. This merging of seven and first is also seen in the ceremonial Sabbatical seventh month that begins with a first day Sabbath.

This merging is also seen in the very nature of the fourth commandment. The regular Jewish Sabbath day is preceded, as well as, followed by six days of work. It closes out the preceding six days of work but introduces the following six days of work. Therefore in the pattern of Seven days it stands as the first day when proceeding those six days and the seventh day as the last day following those six days.

Here we see the anticipation of the “first day of the week” Sabbath under the “new” covenant types of Christ’s redemption found in Leviticus 23-25 where the first day of the week Sabbath harmonizes with the Sabbath Law and patterns of seven. All these feasts are Messianic types of the new covenant.

#### **4. The Day of Atonement** – Lev. 23:27-28, 32

*Also **on the tenth day** of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an **holy convocation** to you; and you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.*

*And **you shall do no work in that same day**: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for*

*you before the LORD your God..... It shall be to you **a sabbath of rest**, and you shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even to even, shall you celebrate **your Sabbath***

Here we see that the terms “*holy convocation*” (v. 27) refers to a Sabbath observance (v. 32).

We also see that God can arbitrarily choose any day to be observed as a Sabbath day (“tenth day”). Here is more proof that the Sabbath Law cannot be restricted to the seventh day “of the week.”

#### **5. Feast of Tabernacles** – Lev. 23:39

*Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days: on **the first day shall be a sabbath**, and on **the eighth day shall be a sabbath**.*

In a pattern of seven days, the first day is a Sabbath and the eighth day rather than the seventh day. In a numerical counting process, the eighth day would occur after the seventh day and thus begin a new pattern of seven. Again, here is a preview of the first day of the week Sabbath under the “new” covenant.

#### **6. Seventh Year Sabbath** – Lev. 25:2-4

*Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you come into the land which I give you, then shall **the land keep a sabbath** to the LORD.*



***Six years** you shall sow your field, and **six years** you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;*

*But in **the seventh year shall be a sabbath** of rest to the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard.*

Here we see that the Sabbath law extends to greater periods of time than a twenty-four hour day. However, remember, that such an extended period of time is not contradictory to the Biblical use of the Hebrew term “day” (yom) in the creation account as it is used in direct connection with the establishment of the Sabbath:

*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.*

*These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, **in the day** that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, -  
Gen. 2:2-4*

The whole period of seven twenty-four hour days is called “*the day*” that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. He did not make the heavens and earth in the seventh day but in the whole period of seven days. Hence, the term “*day*” can be used for a greater period than 24 hours. God uses it for periods of a seventh “year” and the first year after a week of seven years (50<sup>th</sup> year Jubilee) which is also a Sabbath year.

Moreover, notice the parallel pattern between these seven times seven weeks of years and its Sabbaths with the Feast of Pentecost. One is seven weeks of 24 hour days beginning and ending with a first day Sabbath, while the other is seven weeks of years beginning and ending with a first year Sabbath.

## **7. Fiftieth Year Sabbath** – Lev. 25:8-9, 11-12

*And you shall number **seven sabbaths of years** to you, seven times seven years; and the space of the **seven sabbaths of years** shall be to you forty and nine years.*

*Then shall you cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall you make the trumpet sound throughout all your land..... A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of your vine undressed.*

*For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.*

In the sixth year of the final set of seven years before the year of Jubilee, God promises that he will produce sufficient fruit from the land to sustain them through the seventh year, and the year of Jubilee, and year following the Jubilee (3 years worth of fruit), so that they will not have to plant seed until the year following the year of Jubilee:

The fiftieth year is the first year in the next set of Seven years and corresponds to the first day in a pattern of seven days of the week.

## 8. The Predominance of First Day Sabbaths – Lev. 23-25

No one can deny that these feasts are Messianic in type and many were already fulfilled by Christ and will be fulfilled by Christ under the “new” covenant! Does not Paul say that Christ is our Passover (1 Cor. 5:8)? Does not the day of Pentecost fulfil the feast of Pentecost? Does not the cross fulfill the Day of Atonement? Do not the feasts of tabernacles and trumpets have Messianic fulfillment?

Significantly, the Sabbath days in these Messianic Feasts emphasize days that correspond to the first day of the week (1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>) instead of days that would correspond to the seventh day of the week (7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>). This is no accident.

Moreover, it is the fiftieth day Pentecost and the fiftieth year Sabbath (first day of the week and first year Sabbath) that takes precedence over all seventh year Sabbaths. This is no accident.

The Sabbath law by its very nature allows for a Sabbath that proceeds six days as much as one that follows six days within a pattern of seven days. Hence, it stands in the seventh and first position in regard to six working days. This is no accident.

The seventh sabbatical month is also the first month in the new Jewish year and starts with a first day of the month Sabbath. This is no accident.

Hence, the Old Testament Messianic types set precedence for first day Sabbaths under the “new” covenant. Under the “new” covenant the greater work of

redemption that ultimately brings forth a new creation is commemorated by the first day of the week Sabbath.

## **9. Old Testament Types**

*First, it was plainly adumbrated in O. T. times. This change in the weekly Day of rest from the last to the first day of the week, that is, from the seventh to the eighth, as everything pertaining to the Christian era, was intimated under various types and shadows. The work of creation was finished in six days, and on the seventh God rested from His work, which completed a week, or the first series of time. The eighth day, then, was the first of a new series, and on that day Christ rose as the Head of a new creation. The eighth day is accordingly signalized in the O. T., pointing in a manner the most express to the day when Christ entered into His rest, and when in commemoration thereof His people are to rest.*

*Circumcision was to be administered unto children on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). On the eighth day, but not before, animals were accepted in sacrifice (Lev. 22:27). On the eighth the consecration of Aaron as high priest, and his sons, after various ceremonies, was completed (Lev. 9:1). On the eighth was the cleansing from issues, emblematic also of sin (Lev. 15:29). On the eighth day atonement was made for the Nazarite who was defiled (Num. 6:10). When the sheaf of the first fruits was brought to the priest, it was to be accepted on the eighth day (Lev. 23:11)--a distinctive type of the resurrection of Christ. The eighth day was sanctified at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. 7:9), and in its sanctification at the time of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:17). – A.W. Pink,*

**The Christian Sabbath**

## **Conclusion**

In all of these Feasts it is the first day Sabbath, first year Sabbath that dominates and takes precedence in these feasts.

Some object that Leviticus 23-25 refers to special feasts, and special Sabbaths. So they argue that they are the exception to the rule, and exceptions do not invalidate the rule that the Sabbath means seventh day “*of the week.*”

We admit that as a rule, Israel observed the weekly Sabbath on the seventh day of their week due the line of inferences suggested at the beginning. However, remember that line of reasoning is only good for applying it but not restricting it to the seventh day “of the week.”

However, these special feasts typify the “new” covenant and I would argue these special Sabbaths typify a new Sabbath that commemorates the “new” covenant. In contrast to the “old” covenant and its Sabbath, the “new” covenant Sabbath emphasizes the first day in a pattern of seven. Remember, the Sabbath day in the creation pattern of seven days follows, as well as, proceeds six working days. Therefore, it stands in relationship to six days as closing and introducing it, as would the “*first day of the week*” Sabbath in a pattern of seven days.

## The Deuteronical Sabbath – Deut. 5

*And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD your God brought you out there through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.* – Deut. 5:15

The account of the Ten Commandments in the book of Deuteronomy never mentions creation as the reason for keeping the Sabbath. Instead, it is redemption out of Egypt that is the reason given for observing the Sabbath.

The typology here is significant. The law was given to Moses twice. The first time it was given, God wrote it upon stones and delivered to Moses. When Moses came down from the mountain he found the Israel already violating it with open idolatry, and in his wrath, he broke the tablets.

The second time the law was written upon stones, it was written by Moses and in this second record found in Deuteronomy there is no mention about creation as the reason for observing the Sabbath.

The typology is clear. The first giving of the Law in covenant form, it symbolized the sinless creation that was violated by sin. This is a type of the “old” covenant Sabbath. The second giving of the Law in covenant form is connected with a type of redemption out of Egypt. This is a type of redemption under the “new” covenant where the law is written upon the redeemed heart of men rather than upon stone that ushers in a new sinless creation. The first day of the week Sabbath commemorates redemption and a new sinless creation (Heb. 4:9-10).

Adam was created near the end of the sixth day of creation and therefore the Sabbath would have been the first day of his week. Christ is the second and last Adam, and the Sabbath under the “new” covenant is the “first day of the week.”

## The Prophetic Sabbath

*This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it – Psa. 118:24*

Not only does the Old Testament provide a precedence in a shift from the seventh day Sabbath under the “old” covenant to a first day Sabbath under the “new” covenant in the very nature of the Sabbath law, in the Messianic Feast Sabbaths, Deuteronical Messianic type Sabbath, but also in the Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament.

Psalms 118:20-26 is clearly Messianic in nature and predicts the establishment of the first day of the week Sabbath as a memorial by God to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*20 This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.*

*21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.*

*22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*

*23 This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*

*24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

*25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*

*26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.*



I will provide indisputable evidence that this passage refers to Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection and the appointment of a specific day by God to commemorate his resurrection as the new public day of worship for God's people. I will provide indisputable evidence under five points.

- **This is a Messianic prophecy and context**
- **Psa. 118:22 refers directly to the crucifixion of Christ by Israel**
- **Psa. 118:23 refers directly to God's response to Israel killing Christ**
- **Psa. 118:24 refers to God's establishment of a new day of public worship for God's people.**

## **A. Messianic Prophecy**

### **1. The only gate that the righteous can enter is Jesus Christ**

Psa. 118:20 ***This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.***

Jn. 10:7 *Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.  
8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.  
9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

### **2. The "stone" rejected and become the head is Jesus**

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## Christ

Psa. 118:22 *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*

Mt 21:42 *Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?*

Mr 12:10 *And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?*

Lu 20:17 *And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?*

Ac 4:11 *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*

1Pe 2:4 ¶ *To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,*

1Pe 2:7 *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,*

### **3. Verse 26 is directly quoted by Christ in Matthew 23:39 and applied to Himself**

Psa. 118:26 ***Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.***

Mt. 23:39 ***For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, **Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*****

## **B. Psa. 118:22 refers directly to the crucifixion of Christ by Israel**

All the applications of Psalm 118:22 in the New Testament are directly applied to Israel and their putting to death Jesus Christ:

Mt. 21:42 ***Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?...***  
45 ***And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.***

Ac 4:10 ***Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.***  
11 ***This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.***

**C. Psa. 118:23 refers directly to God's response to Israel killing Christ**

Psa. 118:23 *This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*

**1. He first described what the builders did - "refused" as a building stone and that refusal came in the form of crucifying him.**

Psa. 118:22 *The stone which the builders refused*

**2. He then describes what God did in direct response to their refusal of Christ as a building Stone:**

Psa. 118:22 *The stone.....is become the head stone of the corner.<sup>23</sup> **This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes***

God's response to their refusal of Christ as a building stone by putting him to death, was to raise him up to life and make him the corner stone in God's building program. Notice what God did is "marvelous in OUR eyes" or the eyes of believers.

**3. This contrast between killing by Israel and raising him by God is set forth in the New Testament in direct connection with Psalm 118:23:**

Acts 4:10 *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.  
11 **This is the stone which was set at nought of***

***you builders, which is become the head of the corner.***

Thus Peter is explaining that Psalms 118:22-23 is the contrast between what Israel reacted to Christ by refusing and killing him compared to what God did by raising him from the dead.

**4. In Christ's use of Psalm 118:22-23 in the gospel accounts it is always predictive of Israel killing him but His victory over what they did or resurrection by God:**

***Mt. 21:39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.....40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh.....42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, **The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?*****

The resurrection is implied in the fact that the stone rejected (by killing him) becomes the head of the corner (by resurrection).

**D. Psa. 118:24 refers to God's establishment of a new day of public worship for God's people:**

**Psa. 118:23 This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. 24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.**

We have proven that "this is the LORD'S doing" refers to the resurrection of Christ from the grave as verse Psalm

118:22 is directly quoted by Peter in regard to his death and resurrection in Acts 4:10-11.

**1. God responds to Israel's putting to death of Christ in two distinct ways that are inseparably related to each other:**

- a. "***This is the Lord's doing***" = resurrection - Acts 4:10
- b. "***This is the day the Lord hath made***" - day of resurrection

The Lord's doing refers to the **act** of raising him. The "day" the Lord "hath made" refers to the **time** of God's raising him.

**2. The Hebrew term translated "made" means "made to be observed or kept in a certain manner.**

a. The context demands this "we shall rejoice and be glad IN IT" - thus providing the manner in which it is to be observed.

b. The same Hebrew word (Heb. Asah) is used to describe the Sabbath in Deuteronomy 5:15:

Deut. 5:15 *And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded **thee to keep** [Heb. Asah] the sabbath day.*

Psa. 118:24 *This is the day which the LORD **hath made**; [Heb. Asah] we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

c. This cannot refer to the Jewish Sabbath as that

had already been commanded by God to be observed. This is predictive and Messianic of the resurrection day still in the future from David. This is ANOTHER DAY that God "hath made" to be observed in a prescribed manner. This is His resurrection day commanded to be observed by believers in Christ.

*"**WE WILL rejoice and be glad IN IT**"*

This is the "first Sabbath day of a new series of Sabbaths" for New Covenant believers (Mk. 16:9). This is a BETTER Sabbath day observance due to better finished work of redemption by Christ (Heb. 4:9-10). This is the "first day of the week Sabbath" as "this is the day the Lord hath made" for New Testament Christians or "the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10).

The seventh day Sabbath is a "sign" under the "old" covenant of Law without Christ that commemorates the old creation defiled by sin.

The first day Sabbath is a sign under the "new" covenant as a cause of rejoicing and gladness inclusive of Christ's redemption of fallen man from sin and writing of the law upon the hearts of men looking forward to an eighth day millennium or eternal Jubilee in a sinless heaven and earth.

## **New Testament Confirmation**

There are many passages in the New Testament that confirm the Old Testament types and prediction of a first day Sabbath under the new covenant.

1. Heb. 4:1-11
2. Rev. 1:10
3. Mark 16:2, 9
4. 1 Cor. 16:1-2
5. Acts 20:7

In addition to these passages is the fact that there is not one New Testament reference where the churches of Christ ever met for worship on the Jewish Sabbath.

### **Hebrews 4:1-11 – The Better Sabbath**

Possibly the greatest passage in the New Testament that expresses this change of Sabbath day from the “old” covenant to the “new” covenant Sabbath is Hebrews 4:1-11.

The writer of Hebrews strikes a theme from the very first chapter that things under the “new” covenant are “better” than what they had under the “old” covenant and this is true of the Sabbath Day observance.

The former Jewish seventh day of the week Sabbath under the “old” covenant administration commemorates has a past and forward reference. In regard to the past it commemorates what is now a flawed creation. In regard to the future it anticipates the coming of Christ when the kings and kingdoms of this present age enter into the final and



complete history of this flawed creation or the millennial reign of Christ on this earth. However, all this will pass away.

In contrast, the Christian first day of the week Sabbath under the “new” covenant administration also has a past and forward reference which is far better. In regard to the past it commemorates the greater work of redemption signified by His resurrection. In regard to the future, it anticipates a new heaven and a new earth or an eternal eighth day that sin will never enter or defile. It is superior to the “old” covenant Sabbath day in regard to what it commemorates in the past, as well as, what it anticipates in the future.

Both the “old” covenant Sabbath and the “new” covenant Sabbath anticipate spiritual rest in the gospel by faith, as the gospel was preached, and entered by faith under both covenants (See Acts 10:43; 26:22-23; Rom. 10:16; Heb. 4:2; etc.).

Many Christians believe the Sabbath has been abolished, and replaced by spiritual “rest” in Jesus Christ. They often refer to this same passage.

However, these sincere believers place a limitation on this passage that the passage does not teach.

We admit that “spiritual” rest in Christ is a partial fulfillment of the Sabbath law under both covenants. What some fail to understand is that the Sabbath law is not completely fulfilled by mere “spiritual” rest, but points to a complete rest inclusive of spirit, soul and body in a sinless new creation yet to come.

For example, the Old Testament saints believed in the same gospel as we do and entered the same “spiritual” rest by faith and yet observed the Sabbath day:

***For to us was the gospel preached, as well as to them:** but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

***For we which have believed do enter into rest,** as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

*For he spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.*

*And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*

- Heb. 4:2-5

He is referring to those who fell in the wilderness under Moses (Heb. 3:8-10). However, not all fell in the wilderness. Not all rejected the gospel. Faith was mixed in the heart of some and we have Hebrews chapter eleven to prove it, as well as, passages like Acts 10:43.

*To him give all the prophets witness that whosoever believeth upon his name shall receive remission of sins – Acts 10:43*

What is his point? Notice where he begins. He begins with Moses under the “old” covenant in contrast to Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:1-5). Those who embraced the gospel by faith entered into the “rest” of the creation Sabbath. The creation Sabbath commemorated a “rest” characterized by sinlessness. The Creation Sabbath remembers a sinless creation and sinless man in harmony with God. The gospel

provided spiritual rest for sinners as it provided remission of sins (Acts 10:43) and reconciled man with God once again.

However, the creation Sabbath is not fulfilled until all the elect are brought to faith in the gospel and all enter into that spiritual rest:

*Seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: - Heb. 4:6*

However, here is where the spiritual rest view fails. Those who did enter spiritual rest in the Old Testament by receiving the gospel continued to observe the Sabbath day. Why? They continued to observe it because mere spiritual rest does not completely fulfill what the creation Sabbath commemorates. The creation Sabbath commemorates a rest inclusive of the spirit, soul and body, in addition to, a still yet future whole creation that is entirely sinless.

Therefore, the writer of Hebrews argues that the creation Sabbath was not fulfilled yet for even after Moses, David says:

*Again, he limits a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. – Heb. 4:7*

David was the ultimate type of Christ ruling as King in the Promised Land. However, just like David was a type of Christ, and the promised land was a type of the promised rest, the Sabbath day is a type of complete rest spirit soul and body in a sinless new earth – none of which has yet been fulfilled completely. The first step of completion is to enter it spiritually by faith in the gospel but that first step

does not completely fulfill the Sabbath and that is why believers prior to the cross still observed a Sabbath day and that is why believers after the cross will continue to observe a Sabbath day.

Joshua bringing them into the land of Palestine was merely another type that did not fulfill the Sabbath observance:

*For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.* – Heb. 4:8

The reference here is to Joshua as the Old Testament term “Joshua” in Greek is “Jesus.” As long as the Sabbath “rest” of sinless man in a sinless creation with God is unfulfilled:

*There remains therefore a rest to the people of God.* – Heb. 4:9

The terms “a rest” here translate a noun (Gr. sabbatimos) that literally means “**A Sabbath day observance.**” In the previous verses the word “rest” represents a completely different Greek term (Gr. pauo).

As long as we are between the first sinless creation and the second sinless creation there remains a Sabbath day to observe because nothing in between completely fulfills the Sabbath Day. In between these two sinless creations we can enter initially through faith and enjoy spiritual rest. However, the cross and redemptive work of Jesus Christ is fulfilled in a completed rest in a new heaven and earth wherein man enters not merely in spirit, but in soul and body:

*For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his. –*

Heb. 4:10

There is one man who has entered into this rest spirit, soul and body and that is Jesus Christ (v. 14) as the “*firstfruit*” of the resurrection. However, that is yet future for believers:

*Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. –*

Heb. 4:11

“That rest” does not refer to spiritual rest by faith but the rest already entered by that singular person in verse 10. This is a rest that includes our whole person, spirit, soul and body.

However, look again at verse 10. Jesus Christ ceased from his own works (His works is the basis for our redemption) just as God ceased from his works of creation. How did God cease from His works of Creation?

*For he spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, **And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.** – Heb. 4:4*

Jesus rested from his work of redemption by setting apart a Sabbath day to commemorate his work, just as the Psalmist predicted (Psa. 118:24), and just as predicted in the types of the Messianic Feast Sabbaths. That is why there remains “*a Sabbath Day observance for the people of God*” because Christ ceased from His works just as God did from his.

The New Testament calls this Sabbath day “*The Lord’s Day*” (Rev. 1:10) and “*the first day of the week.*” It is not a Sabbath under the “old” covenant restrictions, and laws, but the new and better Sabbath is characterized by the words of the Psalmist - “*we will rejoice and be glad in it.*” It is a Sabbath centered on worship, fellowship, family and rest from our labors in the past six days.

## Revelation 1:10 – The Lord’s Day

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, - Rev. 1:10*

There is a special Greek term translated “*Lord’s*” in Revelation 1:10 that is found only one other time in the New Testament and that is in 1 Cor. 11:20. In 1 Cor. 11:20 it is translated “the Lord’s Supper.”

Some have attempted to interpret Revelation 1:10 and the words “*the Lord’s day*” to refer to the eschatological “*day of the Lord.*” However, that is impossible as this eschatological phrase never varies from “*e hemera kuriou*” when translated into Greek (1 Thes. 5:2) whereas Revelation 1:10 is “*te Kurike hemera.*”

Second, the terms “*kuriake hemera*” were well known in the first century as it was used throughout the Roman world to describe the observation of Caesar worship on the first Sunday of the month. On that day the citizens of the Roman Empire were expected to offer up a pinch of incense unto Caesar and say “*Caesar is Lord.*” Caesar received worship as the god/man.

No doubt, John was exiled on the island of Patmos for refusal to offer up that pinch of incense on Sunday and proclaim “*Caesar is Lord.*” The island of Patmos was a prisoner island for political prisoners. Christians were viewed by Rome as devoted to another king other than Caesar.

Both John and Paul took this term and applied it to the proper worship of Jesus Christ as Lord. Paul denied that the observance of the Supper by the Corinthians was the “*Lord’s*” or “*kuriake*” Supper, or a supper that was observed as prescribed by the true God man (1 Cor. 11:20).

John defined the first day of the week – Sunday – as “the Lord’s Day” or the day belonging to the Lord, and to be observed as instructed by the Lord.

Albert Barnes says in his commentary on Revelation 1:10 and this phrase “the Lord’s day”:

*(1) that this refers to some day which was distinguished from all other days of the week, and which would be sufficiently designated by the use of this term.*

*(2.) That it was a day which was for some reason regarded as peculiarly a day of the Lord, or peculiarly devoted to him.*

*(3.) It would further appear that this was a day particularly devoted to the Lord Jesus, for*

*(a) that is the natural meaning of the word Lord as used in the New Testament, (compare Barnes on "Ac 1:24") and*

*(b) if the Jewish Sabbath were intended to be designated, the word Sabbath would have been used. The term was used generally by the early Christians to denote the first day of the week. It occurs twice in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, (about A.D. 101,) who calls the Lord's day "the queen and prince of all days." Chrysostom (on Psalms 119) says, "It was called the Lord's day because the Lord rose from the dead on that day." Later fathers make a marked distinction between the Sabbath and the Lord's day; meaning by the former, the Jewish Sabbath, or the seventh day of the week, and by the latter, the first day of the week kept holy by Christians. So Theodoret, (Fab. Haeret. ii. 1,) speaking of the Ebionites, says, "They keep the Sabbath according to the Jewish law, and sanctify the Lord's day in like manner as we do." — Professor Stuart. The strong probability is, that the name was given to this day in honour of the Lord Jesus, and because he rose on that day from the dead. No one can doubt that it was an appellation given to the first day of the week, and the passage therefore proves*

*(1) that that day was thus early distinguished in some peculiar manner, so that the mere mention of it would be sufficient to identify it in the minds of those to whom the apostle wrote;*

*(2) that it was in some sense regarded as devoted to the Lord Jesus, or was designed in some way to commemorate what he had done; and*

*(3) that if this book were written by the apostle John, the observance of that day has the apostolic*



*sanction. He had manifestly, in accordance with a prevailing custom, set apart this day in honour of the Lord Jesus. Though alone, he was engaged on that day in acts of devotion. Though far away from the sanctuary, he enjoyed what all Christians hope to enjoy on such a day of rest, and what not a few do in fact enjoy in its observance.* – Albert Barnes – **New Testament Commentary**, “Rev. 1:10”.

There is strong historical support among early Christian writings that the phrase “*the Lord’s Day*” did not refer to any eschatological “day of the Lord” but was understood and applied to the celebration of the resurrection day of Christ.

1. **Ignatius pastor of Antioch** and companion of the Apostles in about A.D. 70 says,

*And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep **the Lord’s Day** as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all the days [of the week]. Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, “To the end, for **the eighth day,**” on which our life both sprang up again, and the victory over death was obtained in Christ...* Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James Editors, **The Ante-Nicene Father’s**, “Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians” Vol. I, p. 63

2. **Theopelus** in A.D. 167 says,

*Both custom and reason challenge from us that we should honor **the Lord’s Day**, seeing it was in that*

*day, our Lord Jesus Christ, completed His resurrection from the dead.*

3. **Dionysius** in A.D. 170 says,

*We passed this holy Lord's day in which we read your letter, from the constant reading of which we shall be able to draw admonition.*

4. **Dynidions** in A.D. 170 says,

*We celebrate only the Lord's Day*

5. **Clement** a Christian in A.D. 192 says that a Christian:

*According to the commandment of the Gospel, observes the Lord's Day, thereby glorifying the resurrection*

6. **Clement of Alexandria** in A.D. 194 says,

*He, in fulfillment of the precept, according to the gospel, keeps the Lord's Day, glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself.*

7. **Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage** in A.D. 250 says,

*The eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath is the Lord's Day.*

8. **The Apostolic Constitutions** written about 250 A.D. says,

*On the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is the Lord's Day, meet more diligently.*

9. **Anatolius** in about A.D. 250 says,

*The solemn festival of the resurrection of the Lord can only be celebrated only on the Lord's Day.*

10. **Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea** in Asia Minor in about A.D. 270 says,

*On regard for the Lord's resurrection which took place on the Lord's Day will lead us to celebrate it.*

11. **Peter Bishop of Alexandria** in Egypt about A.D. 306 says,

*But the Lord's Day we celebrate as a day of joy because on it he rose from the dead.*

Notice that these dates are not that far apart and these quotes come from all parts of the Roman Empire.

Often we hear that every day is the Lord's and no day is any different than any other day. However, if that is true, then the words "*the Lord's Day*" are not true and make no sense. John called one day of the week "*the Lord's day*." David said "*this is the day the Lord hath made*" using the

singular “day” not “days.” God did not raise up Jesus Christ on every day of the week.

### The First Sabbath: – Mk. 16:2,9

*And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun..... Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.– Mk. 16:1-2,9*

The Jewish Sabbath was concluded Saturday evening at 6 p.m. These women purchased and “prepared” the spices (Lk. 24:1) most likely after 6 p.m. Saturday evening and then “early” (Greek *proii*) the next morning between 3 a.m and 6 a.m. came to the tomb. The Greek term *proii* translated “*early*” is the same term used in Mark by Jesus for the fourth watch of the night between 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. (Mk. 13:35 “in the morning” Gr. *proii*). They arrived Sunday morning at the grave “*at the rising of the Sun*” while it was yet still dark (Jn. 20:1).

Mark 16:1-2 make it clear that the “*first day of the week*” was the day following the Jewish Sabbath. Mark 16:9 makes it clear that the first day of the week is the first Christian Sabbath.

The point made in Mark 16:2, 9 is recognized only from the Greek text. In both verses the same phrase “*the first*”

*day of the week*” is found but the Greek text in verse 9 reads differently than in verse 2.

In Mark 16:2 the Greek term for “*first*” is *mia* while the Greek term for “*day of the week*” is the plural *Sabbaton*. The Greek term *mia* is the normal numerical for “*first*.” The plural *Sabbaton* is the normal way to designate any day between two Sabbaths and that is why it is plural. Sunday would be the “*first*” day between Sabbaths, while Monday would be the second day between Sabbaths, or Second day of the week, etc.

However, in Mark 16:9 the Greek term for “*first*” is *prote* while the Greek term for “*day of the week*” is the singular *sabbatou*. The term *prote* refers to the first in a new series of things, while the singular *sabbatou* is the normal term to designate the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

Mark is saying that the “*first day of the week*” is not the Jewish Sabbath (vv. 1-2) but is the first Sabbath in a new series of Sabbaths.

In A.D. 192 a Christian named Clement defined Christians as those who -

**According to the commandment of the gospel,**  
*observes the Lord's Day, thereby glorifying the resurrection.*

Clement of Alexandria in A.D. 194 says,

**He, in fulfillment of the precept, according to the gospel, keeps the Lord's Day, glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself.**

Only the Gospel of Mark designates the first day of the week as the first Sabbath in a new series of Sabbaths. As such, Mark 16:9 could be referred to as “*the commandment of the Gospel.*”

## The Christian Day of Worship

No one can deny that Sunday has been set aside by Christians to assemble for centuries. Some, following the lead of the false prophetess Ellen G. White, have attempted to argue that Sunday worship among Christians originated with Emperor Constantine's decree in 321 A.D.<sup>15</sup> However, there is vast historical evidence that Sunday worship was widely spread among Christians long before Constantine. The more studied Saturdarians admit that Constantine did not originate it but only adopted it as the practice of the state church.<sup>16</sup>

The origin of assembling on the first day of the week is rooted in the practice of the early churches in the New Testament.

### 1. The Resurrection Day

In Luke 24 there is a time line that proves the first day of the week is the resurrection day:

**Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre,**

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<sup>15</sup> “On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits” – Constantine, March A.D. 321

<sup>16</sup> Mark A. Finley writes, “It was Sixtus, the Bishop or ‘papa’ of the Christian church in Rome, who began the process that led to the transference of the day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday. He convinced Christians to celebrate the resurrection, which occurred on Sunday, instead of the crucifixion.” – **The Almost Forgotten Day**, pp. 46-47. Sixtus is dated about 124 A.D.

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*bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them..... Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and **the third day rise again**.... And, behold, two of them went **that same day** to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs..... But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, **to day is the third day** since these things were done. – Lk. 24:1, 7, 13, 21*

All these things above occurred “*upon the first day of the week*” (v. 1). It was “*very early in the morning*” arriving just at sunrise of that same day that the women went to the grave. It was “*that same day*” before noon (v. 30) Jesus met the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus (v. 7). That same day is identified as “*to day is the third day*” (v. 21) since these things were done (“*delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.*” - v. 20). It was on “*the third day*” he was to rise again (v. 7).

Luke provides evidence that the resurrection took place on the first day of the week and not in the late afternoon of the Jewish Sabbath as the Saturday advocates believe.

The “*same hour*” (v. 33) Jesus had broken bread with them (about noon) and departed from them they “*rose up*” and went back to Jerusalem and gathered with the rest of the disciples where Christ appeared to them in the late afternoon prior to 6 p.m. (v. 36). All of these events, including the resurrection occurred “*upon the first day of the week*” between the very early hours of between 5 a.m. to 6 p.m.



## 2. Sunday to Sunday

The Gospel of John provides a time line that proves Jesus purposely assembled with the church at Jerusalem from Sunday to Sunday:

***The first day of the week** cometh Mary Magdalene **early, when it was yet dark**, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. – Jn. 20:1*

*Then **the same day at evening, being the first day of the week**, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, **Peace be unto you**. – Jn. 20:19*

Mary Magdalene arrived “*early*” (Gr. *proii*) or between 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. as that is the precise time designated as “*proii*” or “*early*” (see Mark 13:35 where *proii* is translated “in the morning” and refers to the fourth watch of the night) on the first day of the week (v. 1).

Jesus had already met and ate lunch with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and now assembled with His disciples on “*the same day...being the first day of the week*” (v. 19). It was late in that day “*at evening*” or late in the afternoon. This was the first Sunday assembling.

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

Literally the Greek text says “*with eighth day*” which was a designation for the day following the “seventh” day or the Jewish Sabbath. This is how early Christian writers understood it as well:

**Ignatius** the companion of the apostles in A.D. 60 says,

*And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all the days [of the week]. Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, “To the end, for the eighth day,” on which our life both sprang up again, and the victory over death was obtained in Christ...*

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James Editors, **The Ante-Nicene Father's**, “Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians” Vol. I, p. 63

**Barnabas** in A.D. 120 says,

*Wherefore, also we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also which Jesus rose again from the dead.* - Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James Editors, **The Ante-Nicene Father's**, “*The Epistle of Barnabas*” Vol. I, pp. 146-147.

**Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage** in A.D. 250 says,

*The eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath is the Lord's Day.*

**Augustine** in A.D. 325 says

*The Sabbath is the seventh day, but the Lord's Day, coming after the seventh, must needs be the eighth, and is also to be reckoned the first. For it is called the first day of the week, and so from it are reckoned the second, third, fourth, and so on to the seventh day of the week, which is the Sabbath. But from Lord's Day to Lord's Day is eight days, wherein is declared the revelation of the New Testament, which in the Old was as it were veiled under earthly promises.*

The Gospel of Mark defines the first Sunday to be the first in a series of new Sabbaths. As the “first” day of the week if you count forward it will be the “eighth” or the day following the “seventh” or Jewish Sabbath.

It would appear that he had given them some kind of instructions to meet on that day as He purposely waited until the next Sunday to see them again. This set a precedent.

Some argue that the disciples were meeting on Sunday out of fear. Certainly, they shut the doors out of fear, but it is irrational to speculate they chose Sunday out of all the other days to assemble because they were afraid. If fear were the decisive factor they would be assembling every day out of fear and not just on Sunday.

### **3. Acts 2:1**

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. – Acts 2:1*

Not only did Jesus purposely wait until the next Sunday to meet with his church but the Holy Spirit was purposely sent on Sunday to empower his church.

During the New Testament times, the Sadducees and Pharisees disagreed on what Sabbath Pentecost fell upon. The Sadducees interpreted the seven Sabbaths preceding Pentecost as regular Sabbaths with Pentecost always falling upon Sunday. The Pharisees interpreted the seven Sabbaths as special Sabbaths that always fell on the same dates but not the same days of the week. However, it is the interpretation of the Sadducees that was practiced during the time of the Lord as they held power (F.F. Bruce, The Book of Acts; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971, p. 53, n. 3).

Moreover, the Sadducees interpretation harmonizes best, as the fifty day Pentecost Sabbatical cycle is parallel with the fifty year jubilee Sabbatical cycle which falls on the first year of the new week of years following seven regular Sabbatical years:

*And you shall count to you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven sabbaths** shall be complete:*

*Even to **the morrow after the seventh sabbath** shall you number **fifty days**; - Lev. 23:15-16*

*And you shall number **seven sabbaths of years** to you, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you **forty and nine years**...And you shall hallow **the fiftieth year**, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof: - Lev. 25:8-10*

Leviticus 23 demands that Pentecost falls on the day following the seventh regular Sabbath and that would be the “*first day of the week*” or Sunday or the fiftieth day.

The early church continued to assemble on the first day of the week after the ascension of Christ which would indicate it had become their practice due to the pattern set forth by Christ before his ascension. This same pattern is confirmed again by Christ choosing the first day of the week to send the Holy Spirit.

#### 4. Acts 20:7

*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

Luke presents this as a matter of practice for the church in Troas. Significantly this is a Gentile congregation which would reckon days after Roman time instead of Jewish time or from 12 a.m. to 12 a.m as a twenty four hour day. They most likely had been assembling since Sunday morning and continued right on until the evening into Monday morning.

#### 5. 1 Cor. 16:1-2

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.*

*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

The instructions here were given to the churches of Galatia. So this is not an isolated case but a pattern of practice.

As seen in the gospels, and in the book of Acts there is a pattern of assembling “*upon the first day of the week.*”

Paul’s instructions are clear and reasonable. When they assemble on the first day of the week they are to bring their offerings to the place of assembling, so the members do not have to return to their homes to gather their offerings when Paul arrives for church services on the first day of the week.

It makes no sense to store up your offering at home on the first day of the week if worship services were the day before on the seventh day of the week. However, this is the kind of rationale employed by Saturdarians when dealing with this passage.

Again, these instructions fit perfectly with the pattern developed in the gospels and found in the book of Acts.

## Sunday Observance Prior to Constantine

For the past one hundred years Seventh Day Sabbatarians have constantly and consistently claimed that Sunday worship began with the edict of Emperor Constantine in March A.D. 321.

However, recent Saturday advocates have finally admitted that the practice of assembling on Sunday to worship among Christians can be traced all the way back to at least 124 A.D.

The real truth is that it can be traced right back to the New Testament pattern and practice as has been shown. In contrast, the practice of Saturday worship by churches in the book of Acts cannot be found. What can be found is the practice of Paul as a missionary to consistently go first to the Jewish synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath to witness to the Jews. Nothing more!

What is true about post-apostolic Christianity is that Saturday assembling for worship is extremely rare whereas Sunday assembly was the universal practice in all parts of the Roman Empire.

1. **Justin Martyr** who debated the Jewish scholar Trypho and wrote between the years 110-165 A.D., said,

*But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ on the same day rose from the dead.* - Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James Editors, **The Ante-Nicene Father's**, "The First Apology of Justin" Vol. I, pp. 186

2. **Clement** in A.D. 170 Christian characterizes a Christian as one whom:

*According to the Commandment of the gospel, observes the Lord's Day, thereby glorifying the resurrection.* - Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James Editors, **The Ante-Nicene Father's**,

3. **Tertullian** A.D. 200

*We solemnize the day after Saturday, in contradiction to those who call this day their Sabbath.* - Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James Editors, **The Ante-Nicene Father's**,

4. **Eusebius**, the father of church history in A.D. 324 says,

*"They [the Jewish Christians] also observe the Sabbath, they also celebrate the Lord's Day very much like us in commemoration of His resurrection.*

5. **Mosheim** the Great German Church historian said,

*In the first century all Christians were unanimous in the setting apart the first day of the week on which the Savior arose from the dead, for the solemn celebration of public worship; and it was observed universally as appears from the united testimony of the most credible writers.*



**6. Schaff's History of the Christian Church says:**

*The celebration of the Lord's Day in memory of the resurrection of Christ dates undoubtedly from the apostolic age. Nothing short of apostolic precedent can account for the universal religious observance in the churches in the second century. There is no dissenting voice. This custom is confirmed by the testimonies of the earliest post-apostolic writers, as Barnabas, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr. It is also confirmed by the younger Pliny. The Didache calls the first day "The Lord's Day."*

**7. Augustus Neander said:**

*The opposition to Judaism early led to the special observance of Sunday in the place of the Sabbath....that even the Jews who had come over to Christianity substituted Sunday in the place of the Sabbath....(p. 295).... – Augustus Neander, **General History of the Christian Religion and Church**, London; 1872, Vol. 1*

**8. The Lord's Day commemorates the Resurrection not the Original Creation.**

The universal witness that they observed the Lord's Day not in remembrance of creation, as the Seventh Day Sabbath, but in remembrance of the resurrection proves "the Lord's Day" is not the Jewish Sabbath. The Jewish Sabbath is never said to commemorate any resurrection. The Lord's Day looks forward to a new creation but is observed in remembrance of the resurrection.

## How is Sunday Observed?

*This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.* – Psa. 118:24

David makes it clear that God “*made*” it to be observed and describes how it is to be observed. Not that we “might” but we “*will rejoice and be glad IN IT.*”

The Gospel of Mark sets it forth as the first Sabbath in a new series of Sabbaths (Mk. 16:1-2,9).

The writer of Hebrews demands there remaineth a Sabbath day observance for the people of God (Heb. 4:9).

The Apostle John declares that one day in the week is separated and designated from the rest as “*the Lord’s Day*” – Rev. 1:10.

The Apostle Paul declared it to be a regular weekly day for worship (1 Cor. 16:1-2) and Luke confirmed that it was among the early churches (Acts 20:7).

History confirms it was universally observed and nothing can account for that apart from Apostolic sanction and example.

Hence, there can be no question that it is the New Testament example and precept.

We are not under the “old” covenant Sabbath laws (Col. 2:14-16). The “old” covenant in its entirety has been abolished. That means the moral, civil and ceremonial laws are no longer to be observed in that “covenant” form of administration.

The “new” covenant writes the principle of the moral Law – Love – upon our hearts (2 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 13:8-9). The new inward man “delights in the Law of God” (Rom. 7:22) The “new” covenant is under the power and administration of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The principle of love would lead us to the proper observance of the Lord’s Day as revealed by the examples and principles in the New Testament. The New Testament does set it forth as the “*Lord’s*” day, and not ours. In the New Testament we find it is set apart for public worship in the House of God (Acts 2:1; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Both Acts 2:41-42 and I Cor. 14 provide a list of activities that were performed in public worship.

An appointed day at the appointed house of God is essential for any kind of consistent public worship.

The moral Sabbath does not prohibit all work, as Jesus said “*it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath*” (Mt. 12:12) and that “*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*” (Jn. 5:17). God rested only from the past six days of creative works but never rested from the works necessary to sustain His creation and works that glorify His name. Both our souls and bodies need “rest” from the regular six days of activity in order to maintain their own well being, as the “*Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.*” – Mk. 2:26

There are circumstances and responsibilities that would prohibit some from observing the Lord’s Day regularly. However, it should be the goal of every child of God to seek a way to observe the Lord’s Day for the sake of their own spiritual and physical well being. We are expressly told “*not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together*” (Heb. 10:25).

Personally, I have refused to take any job that denied me the opportunity to observe the Lord's Day. Many employers at least allow for rotating Sunday's where their employees may have opportunity to worship once or twice a month.

I would seriously reconsider moving to any place where no scriptural church is located or take a job that never allowed for any Sunday off for me and my family to worship. God honors them who honor Him. He still sets on the throne and is able to provide a place to live and a job so that we can worship according to the examples and principles of the New Testament.

Observance of the Lord's Day is tremendous witness to the world that Christ has risen and is coming again to usher in a new heaven and earth. It provides a designated time and place for public worship and administration of the ordinances.

However, in the final analysis, our observance should characterize "rest" from all that would we normally do the other six days of the week. Our first priority should be faithfulness to the house of God, followed by fellowship and fun with God's people and with our family. It is meant to be a day of worship, joy and rest with the intent to recharge our spiritual and physical batteries to face another week of work.

Personally, I go to church services. Afterwards, spend time fellowshiping with my Christian family and with my family doing fun. Nothing is wrong in having fun and doing fun things with my Christian and with my own family on the Lord's Day, just as long as "fun" doesn't not replace the house of God and worship.

## Earliest Baptist Confessions of Faith on the Sabbath

### A. The 1689 London Confession of Faith

*Chapter 22: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day*

*1. The light of nature shews that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is just, good and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. ( Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33; Deuteronomy 12:32; Exodus 20:4-6 )*

*2. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creatures; and since the fall, not without a mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but Christ alone. ( Matthew 4:9, 10; John 6:23; Matthew 28:19; Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5 )*

3. *Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one part of natural worship, is by God required of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to his will; with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue. ( Psalms 95:1-7; Psalms 65:2; John 14:13, 14; Romans 8:26; 1 John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 14:16, 17 )*

4. *Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death. ( 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 2 Samuel 7:29; 2 Samuel 12:21-23; 1 John 5:16 )*

5. *The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.( 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12; Exodus 15:1-19, Psalms 107 )*

6. *Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel, tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly nor wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by his word or providence calleth thereunto. ( John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8; Acts 10:2; Matthew 6:11; Psalms 55:17; Matthew 6:6; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42 )*

7. *As it is the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God, so by his Word, in a positive moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished. ( Exodus 20:8; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10 )*

8. *The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs*

*aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations, but are also taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy. (Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15-22; Matthew 12:1-13)*

## **B. The New Hampshire Confession of Faith - 1833**

*We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath;[78](#) and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes,[79](#) by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations;[80](#) by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private[81](#) and public;[82](#) and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God*



## Objections

### 1. Colossians 2:14-17

*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

*Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

Those who advocate the Saturday Sabbath deny Paul is referring to the moral law in this passage but only the ceremonial laws and cite verse 16 as proof. They furthermore claim this refers to only ordinances provided in human “handwriting” (v. 14) rather than the Ten Commandments written in stone.

First, Paul does not say “human” handwriting but only “handwriting” and the first tablets of the Ten Commandments were written by the hand of God. However, Moses broke those tablets and the only ones provided Israel were hand written by Moses. Furthermore, at the time Paul said this, the only records of moral law or any of the law was preserved in human “handwriting” of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Finally, Paul is referring to the whole “old” covenant which contains the moral, civil and ceremonial laws. The moral law has been abolished in its connection with the

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“old” Covenant or covenant established between God and Israel through Moses.

The moral law has not been abolished under the “new” covenant as it is the same law written on stones that is written on the new heart by new birth (2 Cor. 3:3-6). In addition, the ten commandments are referred to several times in the New Testament Scriptures as “good” and “holy” (Rom. 7:7,12; 13:8-9; etc.).

## 2. 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.*

The context is not dealing with Biblical precepts or principles, but with things neither right nor wrong in themselves that the scriptures do not address by either precept or principle:

*I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. – v. 14*

Both Jews and gentile members in the church at Rome brought their own cultural things into their relationship with each other as members of the same congregation. Paul is addressing those cultural foods and holidays unique to their own culture. The churches of Christ were not established to make Jews out of Gentiles or Gentiles out of Jews.

However, there were precepts concerning foods and wine, as well as days they were not to violate because they were Biblical precepts.

For example here is a Biblical precept concerning some foods in relationship to the unbelieving Jew:

*Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:*

*But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.*

*For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.* – Acts 15:19-21

James lists certain things that were particular offensive to the Jews with their dealings with Gentiles. Some of these things were sinful in and of themselves (idols, fornication) but other things were sinful for Gentile Christians only in their relationship with Jews (*things strangled, and from blood*).

Since the Jews were offended by “*things strangled, and from blood*” Christians were not to partake of that diet in connection with Jews as that would prevent Jews from hearing the gospel from such persons. However, such things were no longer in and of themselves condemned under the New Testament administration (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

The first day of the week is explicitly called “The Lord’s Day” (Rev. 1:10) which calls for its observation according to the Lord’s will.

Romans 14 deals with those things that are neither right or wrong in themselves or right or wrong by Biblical precept and principles.

Finally, James 2:10-11 specifically addresses the Ten Commandments and states they are inseparably linked one to the other so that one cannot be violated without violated all of them. This is true of the fourth commandment as much as any other of the ten:

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

*For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. – James 2:10-11*

Jesus gave more attention to the fourth commandment than any other commandment. He was constantly accused of violating the fourth commandment but consistently responded by providing its proper Biblical interpretation.

### **3. Spiritual rest through faith in Christ has fulfilled the fourth commandment!**

Many evangelical believers take this position and claim the fourth commandment is abolished as were the Old Testament House of God, its ordinances and priesthood.

However, what this position fails to understand is that under the “new” covenant all these things had new replacements. The “old” house of God was replaced by the new house of God – the church (1 Tim. 3:15). The Passover was replaced by the Lord’s Supper. The “old” priesthood was replaced by a new priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5).

Likewise, the “old” Sabbath was replaced by the Lord’s Day or first day of the week.

Moreover, this position fails to consider what is necessary to completely fulfill the fourth commandment. The fourth commandment demands that one remember the original creation of God. In that creation man was not merely at spiritual rest with God but man was at rest from all sin, in spirit, soul and body within a total sinless creation.

The Sabbath is not completely fulfilled until man is once again at rest with God in spirit, soul, and body in a new sinless creation. Spiritual rest is but the first step toward that fulfillment.

The fourth commandment not only demanded remembrance of a creation at rest with God without sin, but it also pointed to redemption from sin, not merely redemption of man but of the whole creation redeemed from sin (Rom. 8:18-26; Rev. 21:1-5).

This is why the Lord’s Day is a better Sabbath observance for the people of God (Heb. 4:9) because it commemorates the resurrection of Christ which is the promise of new creation, partially now, and completely fulfilled by a new heaven and new earth and the elect completely redeemed from sin and at rest with God.

## **Conclusion**

The Law of God is not in contradiction to the Grace of God when properly understood and used according to God’s design for both.

The standard of righteousness demanded by the law defines keeping it as sinless perfection. That very standard repudiates any kind of fulfillment by, in or through us and our lives. It drives us from ourselves to righteousness foreign to ourselves – the righteousness of God provided in the substitutionary Person and finished work of Jesus Christ imputed to the believer by faith.

The Spirit of God does not fulfill the Law in, through or by us in regard to justification either here or at the judgment seat of Christ.

In regard to progressive sanctification by the Spirit, the law is fulfilled only in and through us in regard to those aspects of our life empowered by Him, and worked out from the new creature within us (Rom. 8:4, 9-13) but never completely fulfills the standard of the Law in regard to our whole being until glorification (Rom. 8:22-25; 30; 1 Cor. 15:52-57; 1 Jn. 3:1).

The fourth commandment is not contradictory to applying the Sabbath commandment to other days of the week, or to other periods of time longer than twenty-four hours.

The fourth commandment has been fulfilled by Christ but it has not been completely fulfilled in regard to us. We enter spiritual rest by faith in the gospel, but we do not enter the complete fulfillment of that rest until we have entered a sinless new creation spirit, soul and body.

The fourth commandment Law contains nothing inherently moral, except the arbitrary choice of God to apply the Sabbath to one day in a pattern of seven. Neither is the Sabbath Law contrary to applying it to the day preceding six days of work any more than applying it to the

day following six days of work. Indeed, all the Messianic Feast Sabbaths emphasize a first day Sabbath.

The first day of the week, or the Lord's Day is the observance of the fourth commandment under the "new" covenant (Mk. 16:9; Heb. 4:9). It is the command, as well as, the example in the Scriptures.

The former Jewish seventh day of the week Sabbath under the "old" covenant administration commemorates has a past and forward reference. In regard to the past it commemorates what is now a flawed creation. In regard to the future it anticipates the coming of Christ when the kings and kingdoms of this present age enter into the final and complete history of this flawed creation or the millennial reign of Christ on this earth. However, all this will pass away.

In contrast, the Christian first day of the week Sabbath under the "new" covenant administration also has a past and forward reference which is far better. In regard to the past it commemorates the greater work of redemption signified by His resurrection. In regard to the future, it anticipates a new heaven and a new earth or an eternal eighth day that sin will never enter or defile. It is superior to the "old" covenant Sabbath day in regard to what it commemorates in the past, as well as, what it anticipates in the future.

Both the "old" covenant Sabbath and the "new" covenant Sabbath anticipate spiritual rest in the gospel by faith, as the gospel was preached, and entered by faith under both covenants (See Acts 10:43; 26:22-23; Rom. 10:16; Heb. 4:2; etc.).

*This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. – Psa. 118:24*

**- The End**



## Appendix I – Death

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* – Gen. 3:17

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;* - Eph. 2:1

*But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.* – 1 Tim. 5:6

As you can plainly see from the above texts, death cannot be limited merely to physical death. Adam did not physically die “in the day” he ate. The Ephesian believers were not physically dead previous to being quickened by the Spirit. The young widow is not physically dead.

Neither is “life” limited to biological life. God is called the “Living” God and yet He is a “spirit” (Jn. 4:24) and has a “soul” without breath, flesh and blood and thus his “image” is immaterial and “invisible” as Jesus is “*the image of the invisible God*” – Col. 2:15.

Animals share in common with man physical bodies, blood, breath but are not made in the “image” of God and therefore the “image” cannot refer to any of those things that characterize biological life forms. Man alone received his life directly from God. God has no physical lungs to breath physical air and so the life received from God is not merely biological life because the whole animal world received biological life without God breathing into them.

The “image” of God involves more than being merely a rational moral being as angels are rational moral beings

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and yet not made in the image of God. God is a multidimensional Being (Trinity) and so is man (spirit, soul and body) that can exist in and outside of a biological life form (body). Man is created to operate on a higher level than mere biological life. Man is created to operate beyond a moral rational level (soul). He is made to fellowship and worship God “in spirit.” God breathed into man the “spirit of lives” (Heb. Plural) Man’s soul is like God’s soul in that it can consciously exist in or outside of a biological life form. Man’s nature in part is “spirit” just like God’s nature “is spirit” and can exist within or outside of a biological life form. It is the spirit of man that enables man to fellowship and worship with God “in spirit.” It is in the human spirit where union or separation from the “Spirit” of God occurs.

Adam died spiritually in the day he ate. He became dead (separated) unto God due to sin:

*But your iniquities have **separated** between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* – Isa. 59:2

*You hath he quickened who were **dead in trespasses and sins*** – Eph. 2:1

When separation from the life of God occurs in the human spirit then death begins its process in the biological aspect of man and ultimately ends in separation of man’s material self from his immaterial self. The body returns to dust and the spirit returns to God to be dealt with justly according to its condition.

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* – Eccl. 12:7

Eternal death is separation of the whole man from God in Gehenna forever (Rev. 20:12-15).

The physical body is merely the vehicle of expression for the immaterial nature of man while on earth. It provides contact between the immaterial man and the external world. However, once biological death occurs, the body returns to the dust and no longer is able to express the soul's desires, hate, love, memory any longer "under the sun."

While the spirit indwells the body, the body serves to express the desires of the spirit. The body is the vehicle of expression for the soul "*under the sun.*" When the body dies and is placed under the sod, it no longer can provide soul expressions such as hate, love, or memory any longer "*under the sun.*"

*For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.*

*Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. – Eccl. 9:5-6*

However, at death the soul is not killed but continues in conscious existence:

*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. – Mt. 10:28*

.... *the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments* –  
Lk. 16:22-23

The rich man's body was "buried," but his soul went to hades. The body died but the soul continued to consciously exist.

Therefore "death" is a state of existence. In direct contrast "life" is also the opposite state of existence to "death." . Biological "life" is the union between the material and immaterial aspects for existence in the physical world.

Spiritual life is the eternal union between the human spirit and the Spirit of God.

Eternal life is the eternal union of man with God in body, soul and Spirit in a new heaven and earth.

Regeneration is among many other things the union of God's Spirit with the human spirit that brings spiritual life. This union not only provides the eternal life so that the immaterial man never ever suffers spiritual death:

*And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* – Jn. 11:26

He is not promising they will not suffer biological death as the very context speaks of the future resurrection of the body. He is promising that what is born of Spirit, which is spirit (Jn. 3:6) cannot experience the condition of spiritual death because it is brought into an inseparable union with the Spirit of God and is incapable of death. This is what it means to be "in the Spirit" and all who are not "in the Spirit" are "none of his" but reside in the condition of spiritual death = separation spiritually from God.

*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* – Rom. 8:8-9

Regeneration is in part the union between the human spirit and the Spirit of God. Without this union there is no spiritual life and all without the indwelling union of the Spirit of God are “**none of his**” before or after the cross.

Apart from spiritual union with God there is no relationship or fellowship with God but only the condition spiritual death (separation) from God.

All the elect from Adam to the last one saved were regenerated or brought into spiritual union with God and the proof is that the fruits of righteousness were made manifest in their lives proving they had been given a new heart from God.

Regeneration is pictured in external circumcision under the “old” covenant public administration. It pictures the cutting off of the old flesh on the human generative organ. This is a picture of being given a new life due to spiritual union with God – a new heart.

Remember, those “in the flesh” cannot please God. In the context of pre-cross saints the writer of Hebrews says “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Then he lists all those who did please God who lived “by faith.”

Remember, actions and words originate with determined thoughts and determined thoughts originate with the heart and its motives. Fallen man, regardless of what era he lived

is born “in the flesh” with a heart that is at enmity to God and is not subject to the Law of God. Faith is the product of a righteous heart which comes only by new birth. The new birth is not merely the union of the human spirit with the Spirit of God but it is the inner cleansing of the human spirit from the defilement of sin (Tit. 3:5) whereby the Holy Spirit can have an inner sanctuary created in “righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

Adam, Eve and Abel were all redeemed by faith in the coming sacrifice of the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world in type when God clothed Adam and Eve in the skins of animals. This is why Abel’s offering was more acceptable than Cain’s because Abel’s offering was by faith in the promise of Genesis 3:15 pictured in the sacrifice of lambs that God used to make the clothes of Adam and Eve to cover their shame of nakedness due to their sins.

Spiritual union/regeneration is not the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Spiritual union has to do with the personal relationship between the elect and God. The baptism in the Spirit has to do with the institutional relationship between the public house of God and God. It signifies that God has approved the institutional house of God and has come to abide in that institution forever. It is what makes the “house of God” the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).