

Why the 7th day Sabbath? Aren't we to live under grace and not under law?

The answer to the question is “Yes, as new covenant believers in what God did for us through Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, we live under the righteousness that comes by grace and not by law” That means we do not have the responsibility to fulfill those ceremonial and sacrificial laws that foreshadowed Christ’s coming. His coming brought the full forgiveness of God to its fullest reality for those who genuinely repent of their sins and believe that Christ died to forgive them their sins, and he rose to prove the awesome power of God at work in those who believe over the power of both sin and death.

However, the New Testament is also very clear that sin is still exactly the same activities under both covenants, and that God’s own righteousness and righteous expectations are still the same as they have always been. Our power, capacity, and opportunities to strive without guilt in pursuing righteousness HAS changed.

While as a people we don’t profess to have perfect understanding, we hold the Bible to be the full and fully adequate revelation of God to any who would be His children. Along with the rest of Seventh Day Baptists we find nothing in the New Testament proclaiming that it was wrong for a believer to worship on the Sabbath. Rather as their custom was they entered Sabbath by Sabbath into the synagogues to preach the word. Why? Because they did not see Christianity as separate from its Jewish heritage, but separate from its Pharisaical leaders teachings of what God wanted through Judiasm.

The Sabbath which was given to man in the Garden of Eden, and was re-established before Mt Sinai in the schedule of the giving of the manna, in our view, was NOT ceremonial. It was “remembered” in the 10 commandments or “testamony”. We find that the 10 commandments are not 9 commandments of moral righteousness and 1 commandment of ceremonial righteousness. No even handed application of judicial principles allows for interpreting one part of an intact body of laws from one legal perspective and takes something out of the middle and applies another set of rules of interpretation and application to it. Such a ruling would be thrown out of any higher court upon review. The courts of man have attempted to say that the Sabbath commandment is ceremonial, or a relativistic “principle” which means “a day” is to be kept as holy.

But man can’t make things holy, even though we can commit things to be used for holy purposes. Only God can declare and grant that status to anything in heaven or on earth. What God has declared to be holy remains holy in God’s eyes, even if man corrupts it..

God sanctified and set apart the Sabbaths of the weekly order of time for the benefit of man. If the Sabbath was important for man to have with God as the first day Adam and Eve spent with God in the perfection of the garden before sin intruded, how much more of benefit was it and is it as an unrealized blessing to those who enter its holy time to find the hidden blessings while we still to continue to live under the lingering consequences of the curse of Sin.

The belief in one as the only living God, the Sabbath and circumcision were three of the distinguishing customs (or hallmarks) of Judiasm. The rabbis from olden times understood circumcision to be an outward symbol of what was to happen in their hearts (that’s why the condemnation for having uncircumcised hearts was such a sharp criticism from Jesus and the apostles against the leaders). We continue to walk in the same understandings, except for modern Christianity’s assumption that the Sabbath was done away with by Jesus and the early apostles. Circumcision was often mentioned as an issue with the Jews. The Sabbath was not an issue mentioned any where in Acts as a place where there was a contention between the Jewish

believers and the Gentile believers. Matter of fact in Antioch, when the opportunity was presented in the synagogue to share the Gospel, the scriptures say that at the end of that meeting the people spoke of wanting to hear more. So, without any mention of any alternative time of gathering for worship to God, it is the next SABBATH that almost the entire city comes together to hear and discuss more about Jesus. No mention of anything happening “on the next day” or the following day.... Which is stranger is that nothing would have happened to be reported “on the Lord’s day” after each of the times of worship in the synagogue on those two Sabbaths. Ironically, the modern church’s assumption that the church kept the first day of the week as the Lord’s Day isn’t even backed up by the record of the early church history. If it was universally taught and practiced that the first day of the week was the Lord’s Day and was to be used for Christian worship and teaching, why did the early eastern orthodox church keep the 7th day as the Sabbath of their Lord? Why did Constantine find it necessary for political and practical reasons to declare that the first day of the week would be the day of worship for the Roman Empire (expecting both Mithrians and Christians to worship and then return to their work).

It is our contention that if the Bible is the inspired Word of God, as we hold it to be: that anyone having no awareness of the “history” of Christianity and only a Bible to study, would determine any day other than the 7th day to have been declared to be both a personal day of blessing and a day to make certain that the whole community around believers was free NOT to be required to labor. One of the modern catechisms of the Roman Catholic church uses the change of the Sabbath to Sunday as the “clear illustration” that the Pope has the authority to change the Laws and Ordinances of God. Note too, that the same western Roman Catholic church has restructured and renumbered the 10 commandments to not follow the ancient listing which Judaism and modern Christian has continued to present regarding the 10 commandments which God gave.

The Protestant church emerging from the western Roman Catholic church in the 1600s wasn’t willing to fully reject everything that the Roman church had established. Martin Luther in his writings, mentions the Sabbath issue, and in his desire to reform the Catholic church and not start a new one, he writes that he was going to ignore this issue or else he would destroy the Roman Church, and all he wanted to do was reform it’s practices. Seventh day Baptists emerged during this time in Holland, Germany, and England, and took the position that if we are to follow the Bible and not the traditions of men, that we need to keep the 10 commandments as the core teachings of what the core moral concepts of righteousness with God included. These 10 were summed up in the two great laws of love and “dangled down” as detailed descriptions of what real love for God and real love for Man would DO or NOT DO... depending on the specific command of God in the 10 commands, as God gave it to the people.

There is no passage in the New Testament that links the phrase “Lord’s day” ...found a total of three times... and the first day to being one and the same. John’s statement in Revelations can simply mean “I was in the Spirit in the Day of the Lord... Meaning under His reign and authority....which was established when he was glorified and now rules until “everything is under his feet”.

There is no passage in the New Testament that forbids keeping the Sabbath as holy time. There are numerous passages that criticize the manner and spirit of keeping the time holy (set apart for us to have time with God, who is holy). There are also several passages which allow for difference between our understanding and desire to honor God on the Sabbath and others of God’s children who do not agree with us on this matter at the present time. Those passages, as the one found in Romans on disputing about times and seasons, speaks of weaker and stronger

consciences, but allows for both. Although many Christians might believe that anyone who feels the need to honor the Sabbath is “weak” in faith, this passage says that such a person is not a sinner in seeking to keep it, as long as their consciences are convicting them that they need to do this to honor God. In the same manner we do not contend that a person cannot be saved if they have NOT kept the Sabbath commandment....unless they have been convicted that it's right and are disobeying the leading of the Holy Spirit in their understanding. Then there might be consequences or corrections because they are not honoring what they know to be an understanding of their faith.

The Sabbath remains a hidden and lost blessing for much of Christianity. It's one thing we choose to do in honor that others may not understand, but must understand we have the freedom to do.... **THAT'S UNQUESTIONABLY FULLY SCRIPTURAL !!!**