

What About The Sabbath?

Copyright © 2007

**The Olivetree Connection
Brisbane, Qld
Australia**

All English Bible quotations are exclusively from the New King James Version as published by Logos Library Systems, Inc. 1997. Greek texts are from the Nestle-Aland Version of the 26th Edition of the Greek Text of the New Testament and Hebrew text is from the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia as published by Logos Library Systems, Inc. 1997.

Other Publications & Writings by the Same Author:

Dancing With The Scimitar of Islam
Will There Be A Secret Rapture?
Passover Haggadah
Torah: Mosaic Law or Divine Instructions?
Replacement Theology

<http://theolivetreeconnection.com>

Cover Design: Frank Selch

P.O. Box 2004, Kelvin Grove Qld 4059
Australia

Introduction

Jewish people have observed the seventh day Sabbath since the Babylonian exile. Although Sabbath observance had been a commandment since Sinai, its significance, and importance to the Most High, did not strike the descendants of Jacob until their temple was destroyed and they were sent into Exile.

During the Exile, a new type of spiritual leadership arose among the Hebrews— the Scribes and the Rabbis. Through the prophets, and later through Ezra, they began to understand how serious their neglect of the 4th Commandment had been.

Over the following centuries, and since their being exiled a second time in 135 C.E., the observance and celebration of the seventh day Sabbath became the heart of Judaism. For most observant Jewish people the Sabbath is today the most important day of the week; indeed, it is the focal point of the week.

The Second Testament of the Bible informs the reader that any sincere follower of Yeshua of Nazareth, called the Messiah (Gr. Christos), is grafted into the Ancient Olive tree which is the faith of Abraham and thus making him/her into a citizen of Israel (Eph. 2:12).

If this is true, then all fair dinkum Christians ought to join with the Jewish people in sanctifying that day and in turn be sanctified by its observance (Ex.31:13; Ezek.20:12)!

However, this is not the case today, nor has it been since the days of Constantine, when the Sunday was decreed by the Roman

Emperor to be the ONLY legitimate day of worship for Christians.¹

The content of this booklet was originally intended to be part of a study on the Torah and the influences of Hellenism on the Judeo/Christian world: 'Torah: Mosaic Law or Divine Instruction?'

So why did I not include this?

God's Sabbath is a special time set aside by Him and for Him. For this reason we should endeavour to understand it, know its purpose and meaning for the Christian; indeed for the entire world. The Sabbath, is a unique topic all of its own and deserves special attention – hence this booklet.

Too often, the tendency is to move to either of the two extremes— by treating the Sabbath too lightly as the world around us does, or becoming completely legalistic — afraid to move on the Sabbath.

But, was this God's intent? Hardly!

As it says in the Scriptures, the Sabbath should be a delight for God's people. The same applies to the other nine Commandments, i.e. their observance should be a matter of the heart for it is one of the '*house-rules*' of God's Kingdom. However, to legislate the keeping/observing of the seventh day Sabbath, purely because it is part of the Commandments, would be to fall into the trap of legalism.

We are living now in a post-Christian era. Consequently, there are several factors Biblical Christians need to consider concerning the way we live and walk before our Creator.

¹ See Appendix for the meaning of the names of our week days.

What About the Sabbath?

It is a reality that the Creator Who made us set one day out of seven (1/7th of the week) aside for Himself during which He could receive our undivided attention. The prophet Isaiah alludes to it in this way....

*“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy day of YHWH honorable,
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,
Nor finding your own pleasure,
Nor speaking your own words ...” Isa. 58:13*

I believe that the main factor, concerning the Sabbath, is how much REAL TIME do we freely give back to Him we owe our existence to, in Who we move and have our being (Acts 17:28).

There is not a shred of evidence in the New Testament that either Yeshua, or Sha'ul, abrogated the 4th Commandment. However, there is much proof from church history that virtually all the leading churchmen ('Fathers') did their utmost to wrench the church from its Hebrew/Jewish moorings— and actually succeeded.

In the following pages, we will look at some of the most significant arguments brought against a Christian observance of the seventh day Sabbath. We will also look at the Biblical evidence that exists why the people of God should observe ALL COMMANDMENTS— not as a matter of Law, but because they are the moral code of the Creator, which He gave for a successful functioning of His Universe and as tools of maintaining our redemption. Although the promise of a New Covenant refers to the Torah written in our hearts, it is a fullness we will not experience until we actually enter the Kingdom of God in the Age to come!

What About the Sabbath?

As will be shown, church authorities thought nothing of altering the Commandments, either by removal, by rendering them invalid as in the case of the Biblical Sabbath or by changing the day designated by the Almighty. The change of the seventh day Sabbath to Sunday is just as much a part of Replacement theology as the claim that the Church has replaced Israel as the People of God.

So how does one observe and keep the Sabbath holy and at the same time find it a delight? Can we glean something from the Scriptures in general and from the attitude Yeshua showed in the few brief Sabbath encounters that are recorded? Is there something, on the one hand, we may perhaps learn from the way the Jewish people practiced the Sabbath injunction? Or, on the other hand, do we see their Sabbath keeping 'as pure law'? This study is not by any means presented as definitive of the issue before us, but as a catalyst for anyone with the desire to further study and research this important matter for themselves

As Yeshua said, '*...the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath...*' Mark 2:27!

It was given to man so that he could enjoy the Creator in the midst of His Creation without disruptions, for all would be at rest. The fall of Adam corrupted this relationship, but through Yeshua that is now reversed.

Finally, there is a great and wonderful purpose to the remembrance and observance of the Sabbath:

- 1) The Sabbath uniquely identifies the Creator, and
- 2) It identifies the true people of God

What About the Sabbath?

The Sabbath is God's SIGN, which identifies not only GOD as CREATOR-RULER, but it also identifies those who are truly HIS people!

Yeshua demonstrated that obedience is the key component to any relationship that humans can have with God. If then he had to learn obedience by the things that he suffered, how much more so we whose origins are not the Spirit of God, but of sinful flesh. Obedience is stressed in the second Commandment (Ex. 20:5-6) and again by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount; viz. *'...²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven...'* (Matt. 7:21). Sha'ul, in Romans 6:16 intensifies this thought, *'...do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?'*

Many people in the Christianized world are quite happy to accept most of the Commandments- including the Sunday as a day of rest - as a general rule for life, albeit without any commitment to the Creator.

However, the Sabbath command is the one most people will positively REBEL against! It is THE ONE precept of the Bible that is the crucial test of obedience! It IDENTIFIES those who have surrendered their wills to God - who OBEY God, regardless of persecution or cost!

But, most importantly, it identifies the TRUE CREATOR-RULER and those who are truly His, who on the very DAY He set apart for Himself, will gather to study His Word and worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

A General Perspective

If I were to ask any practicing Christian the simple question, *'How many Commandments did God give to Moses on Mt. Sinai?'* In all probability, my question would be met with a look of incredulity! Of course, the answer is ten! If I were then to ask the next question, *'Have these Commandments ever been repudiated?'* The answer would be – in most cases – a resounding NO!

Yet, for some mysterious reason, Christian thinkers managed to modify the Commandments by excising the Biblical, 7th day Sabbath, seemingly without doing any violence to the number Ten. For example, the R.C. Church does not even include the 2nd Biblical Commandment in its Catechism, which contains the prohibition against idols, in its teaching despite the fact that it is there in RC Editions of the Bible. The generally stated reason, for omitting it from its Catechism, is that it is contained in the 1st. Nevertheless, one is compelled to ask how this is possible, because they do teach that there are Ten Commandments? Well, the theologians solved the problem by dividing the tenth! Although the most significant Commandment for that idolatrous church was gone, the Vatican still had Ten Commandments and most people were none the wiser.²

So what about the practice of the Evangelicals? The Protestant Bible clearly shows the Sabbath as one of the Ten Commandments and they are certainly taught in their fullness. However, in Protestant practice the Biblical Sabbath has

² See appendix

What About the Sabbath?

metamorphosed itself into the first day of the week, namely the Sunday— without any Biblical instruction to do so!

But where then, is the Commandment to honour the Sunday? In addition, what are we going to do with the Commandment concerning the seventh day Sabbath, since Yeshua Himself said that not even a fragment of the Commandments would be done away with!³

So, should a Christian therefore **remember** (Ex.20:8 ff.) and **observe** (Deut.5:12 ff.) **the Biblical Sabbath** as it is written in the Scriptures?⁴

This question can only be answered by asking: *'What does the Bible teach on the subject?'*

There cannot be any question that the *Ten Commandments* were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai for the entire human race and that the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath is part of them. It is equally true that Yeshua clearly stated that heaven and earth would pass away before even the smallest component of the Commandments would be done away with. It is a further reality that the Biblical Seventh day was abolished by Constantinian Christendom and replaced by a legislated Sunday observance; i.e. it became law to go to church on a Sunday.⁵

In dealing with the question of law, as used by Christian translators and interpreters, it is important to understand that

³ Matthew 5:19

⁴ The Hebrew word *shamor* has the sense of guarding and protecting, e.g. keeper of sheep, rather than a mere religious observance.

⁵ Until the second Vatican Council in 1963 it was easier for a Roman Catholic Christian to find forgiveness for murder than for consistently not turning up at Mass on a Sunday morning. Failing to attend Mass on a Sunday was considered to be one of the 'deadly sins'.

Hellenistic thinking worked its deception on the question of the Sabbath as much as it did on the rest of Christian thought.⁶

The complex subject of the Seventh day Sabbath is a topic that has been argued over in Christian circles for many centuries. Therefore, even attempting to discuss the Sabbath, can elicit with many a whole gamut of emotions and feelings! Namely, one of the companion questions, which commonly arise from such discussions almost without fail, are statements like

- *that we are not saved by law, but by Grace and not by Works; and*
- *we are free to worship on any day.*⁷

The problem, as I see it, is that many opponents of the Biblical Sabbath demonstrate a difficulty with understanding the whole purpose of redemption and salvation. They continue to insist that Israel was saved by works, Christians are saved by grace, observing the Biblical Sabbath is a 'works' issue, and therefore to be avoided by Protestants at all costs.

But what about those denominations, which regard works as important for salvation? What is their excuse for substituting Sunday for Saturday?⁸

May I suggest here that there are valid reasons that support

⁶ The deception went so far, that even calendars were changed to make Monday the 1st day of the week and the Sunday was referred to as Sabbath. To this day, this order is still observed in some parts of the USA, as well as in other parts of the world.

⁷ There is no commandment anywhere in the Scriptures that insists on worshipping the Most High on any given day, whether it is the Sabbath or any other day. The true worship of God is an ongoing, living attitude to life, which knows no separation or distancing from God.

⁸ "On the 18th of January, 1563, the Council of Trent ruled that Tradition is greater than Scripture, after a powerful speech by the Archbishop of Reggio, in which he said that the fact that the Church had changed the Fourth Commandment clearly proved that Tradition was greater than Scripture." *H.J. Holtzman, Kanon und Tradition, 1859 edition, p. 263.*

the need for an in-depth study concerning the Sabbath? Therefore, I would like to begin this study by considering these Biblical factors,

- a) *the absolute nature of the Scriptures, and,*⁹
- b) *the words of the Son of God Himself.*¹⁰

The Scriptures make a major point in denouncing any adherence to human traditions over the plain instructions of the Word of God (c/f. Matt.15:1-9; et al.). The Apostle Paul acknowledges his zeal for the traditions of his fathers (Gal.1:14—referring to the *Oral Torah*). However, in doing so, he also gives tacit acknowledgment that his zeal for those traditions ('...*exceeding that of his contemporaries...*') had blinded him to the truth and resulted in his persecution of the Son of God and his followers (c/f. Rom.10:2-3). Although the word tradition may not appear in our translations, there is also ample evidence that the Children of Israel adopted customs (rites & rituals) at times in their history, that were leading them away from their God (c/f. Jer.10:1 ff.; et al.)

From the Gospel accounts, we can see that Yeshua plainly stated that none of the Commandments would ever pass away (Matt.5:17-20)! So how can any theologian, emperor or pope assume the right to set himself above Yeshua— the master (kurios) they claim to be following?

Some argue that when Yeshua declared himself '*Master of the Sabbath*' he thus 'abolished' the Sabbath. This, however, is not

⁹ Matthew 5:18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Torah (law) till all is fulfilled."

¹⁰ Matthew 15: 3, 8-9 "*Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? ...these people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*"

a valid argument either, because the 'Church Fathers' replaced the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible by establishing a Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week— the Sunday. If, as they claim, Yeshua abolished the Sabbath, then why create another one? Is it not more likely that, by seeking to escape from 'Jewish' law, the Emperor Constantine by establishing a Christian law deliberately broke the Commandment of God and the Christian world has done so ever since? Paul teaches plainly that true followers of Yeshua are grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel— thus becoming living, active members of God's people. Consequently, the observance (setting aside) of the Seventh Day Sabbath is also a Christian issue.

Others make the assertion that '*Yeshua changed the Commandment because he is God*'. This too is an invalid argument, because if he did, we can then no longer assert with the Scriptures that Messiah kept the Torah (law) perfectly (Heb.4:15). In addition, if he were 'God' he would have broken his own Commandments— contrary to the fact that the Almighty declares through the prophet Malachi (3:6) that *He changes not!*¹¹

In the light of this, should we not pause to think why Yeshua asserted so strongly that it was the traditions of men, which made the Word of God null and void (Matt.15:6-9; Mk.7:9,13)?

Many Christians regard the Sabbath at best as somewhat of an enigma, or at worst a scourge. Yet, a plain reading of all the Biblical texts concerning the Sabbath brings to light a whole plethora of wonderful, inspirational thoughts. Among these are the following:

¹¹ Here is a fundamental difference between the God of the Bible and the god of Islam. The God of Israel proclaims that He changes not, whereas Allah reserves the right for himself to abrogate his laws whenever he chooses.

What About the Sabbath?

- ✚ The Sabbath is to honour the Creator
- ✚ The Sabbath is God's own day of celebration (Isa.56:2-8)
- ✚ The Sabbath is a celebration of Creation itself (Gen.2:2-3)
- ✚ The Sabbath is a gift from God enabling humans and animals to rest from their labours and be refreshed (Exod.16:29)
- ✚ The Sabbath was set aside as a special day celebrating a perpetual Covenant with Israel (Exod.31:16)
- ✚ The Sabbath is a gift to man, symbolizing his freedom from slavery (Deut.5:15; Mk.2:27; Lk.6:5; Heb.4:8-10)
- ✚ The Sabbath is special to God, therefore it should also be special to us (Exod.20:8-11)— not as a law to keep for the sake of our righteousness, but a day of celebration out of love for our Creator, for no other reason but because it is His day (Isa.56:4-6).

There cannot be any doubt that God gave the Sabbath to Ancient Israel as a perpetual, or everlasting, Covenant (Exod.31:16; Isa.56:6). Many argue however, that apart from the Genesis account, the Sabbath is never mentioned again in any legal sense until Israel's journey to Mt.Sinai (Ex.16:23-29). From their perspective, the Sabbath was never intended for the nations in general, but for Israel alone as a covenantal condition. Christian theology therefore views the Sabbath of Israel as a mere shadow of the (Millennial) Sabbath to come. The flaw in this argument is the fact that none of the other Commandments were ever mentioned before Sinai either, yet are deemed to be binding for the entire human race.¹² Despite the fact that most of the civilized world today

¹² Some theologians suggest that the reason why the Sabbath is excluded for the nations is that Yeshua never mentioned the 4th Commandment in any of his teachings. If this reasoning

regards the God of the Hebrews with disdain, the Ten Commandments are the mainstay for our global system of law, order and justice, which benefits Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Atheists, etc alike.¹³

There cannot be any doubt that Christian rulers saw great advantage in developing systems of legislation based on the rules of Sinai— except for the Sabbath. Therefore, by altering the fourth Commandment, or removing it altogether, the distinctly Hebrew/Jewish character of the Commandments was also changed and could thus be claimed as uniquely Christian.

Some Arguments Against A Christian Observance Of The Sabbath

There are some seemingly valid arguments against the keeping of the Biblical seventh day Sabbath, which I believe need to be examined.

- ✚ The Sabbath was given specifically to Israel (Exod.16:23). If Sabbath-keeping was revealed as divine law from creation for every nation, why would God now specify Israel as the nation obliged to keep the Sabbath
- ✚ The origin of weekly Sabbath observance is not at creation, but at Sinai (Neh.9:13-14).

were to be followed to its conclusion we would also discover to our dismay that Yeshua categorically stated that he was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel alone (Matt.15:24; c/f.10:6) and not to the gentile world.

¹³ The question is open to why do refugees from 'Third World' Dictators seek out Judeo/Christian nations despite all their spiritual shortcomings, if it not for their Biblical worldview contained in laws and social structures?

What About the Sabbath?

- ✚ The Sabbath is part of God's Torah (law) given through Moses and thus part of the whole system of Sabbatical observance revealed at Sinai— and through it Israel was bound to a whole system of Sabbaths and holy days (Nehemiah 10:29-33).

The purpose of the Sabbath, though it reflects God's rest at creation (Ex. 20:11), is *specifically to commemorate the Exodus of the nation of Israel from Egypt.*

The Covenant made with Israel at Horeb was *not made with the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob).* The Ten Commandments therefore cannot represent some universal law given to all humankind. The statement in Deuteronomy 5:3 is specific: “YHWH did not make this Covenant with our fathers.” The Sabbath was given to Israel as a sign of God's special relationship with Israel, “...that they might know that I am YHWH who sanctifies them!” (Ezek. 20:12). This would have no point, if the Sabbath was required of all nations. It is a particular mark of God's dealing with one nation, Israel.

The Ten Commandments are part of a whole legal system given to Israel. The *Ten Words* were unique in the sense that they were spoken from the mountain directly to Israel. Whilst it is true that laws against killing and adultery also have permanent validity for all men, it is nowhere said that all ten (which includes the Sabbath law representing the whole Sabbatical system) are binding on all men at all times.

The Sabbath was the seal of the Mosaic Covenant and the major condition for retaining the rights to the land.

We should treat Paul's only reference to the words “Sabbath”

and “Holy Days” in Col.2:16 as being of major importance due to their singular occurrence in the whole of his preserved writings. In this verse, Paul describes the holy days (annual observance), new moons (monthly observance) and Sabbath (weekly observance) as “shadows”. In so doing, he reveals the apostolic mind on this crucial issue; i.e. Yeshua fulfilled the law, and, by declaring himself the Master (Lord) of the Sabbath, he actually fulfilled it and thereby abolished it.¹⁴

Biblical Evidence Supporting A Christian Observance Of The Sabbath

Refutation

Before we study the validity of an observance of the Biblical Sabbath for all humankind, I want to look at the flaws of the above arguments. The refutations offered here are based exclusively on Biblical evidence.

The Sabbath was given specifically to Israel. Exodus 20:8 seems to be contradicted by the repetition of the Commandments in Deuteronomy Chapter 5. Exodus 20:8 clearly states that Israel should remember the Sabbath because God rested on the seventh day after creating the universe, but the Deuteronomic verse appears to make the Sabbath a specific commemoration of the Exodus. A similar argument could also be applied to the fifth Commandment,

¹⁴ The Hebrew meaning of the word ‘law’ is Torah, which correctly translated, means ‘instruction’ – not law. Therefore, if Yeshua fulfilled the instructions given by his Father, he would have continued to remember and observe the Sabbath – not abolish it.

which also includes a promise involving land (Ex. 20:12). Since God has not given any particular portion of land to any group of Gentiles, except to Israel alone— this argument is therefore invalid because no true Christian would dare to suggest that the 5th Commandment as non-applicable to Christians. The proponents of this argument appear oblivious to the fact that God had chosen Israel as the nation through whom He would reveal His divine plan and order for all of Creation. Israel is the model-nation through whom the Eternal One would reveal the moral order of Creation, as well as His means by which all of humanity could be restored to Divine Favour. Israel is the vessel through whom the light of God would shine to all nations (Isa. Ch.60)

Sabbath observance is not given at creation... Sinai is the place where the Eternal One re-establishes, or re-activates, the moral order of the Universe.¹⁵ Therefore, the inclusion of the Sabbath with the other Commandments merely formalizes the observance of a divinely decreed/gazetted day of rest, for the purpose of reflection (and specially focussed worship), as an absolute component of the Divine Order.

Israel was bound to a whole system of Sabbaths... Only the weekly Sabbath is part of the Ten Commandments— the other Sabbaths are part of the ceremonial instructions. The 'Festival Sabbaths' and the agricultural Sabbaths serve a different purpose to the weekly Sabbath and deserve to be studied from the depth of the Hebrew language and tradition, rather than pontificated on from the shallowness of our translations.

¹⁵ Romans 5:13 '*...For until the Torah sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no Torah (i.e. instruction from God).*

The purpose of the Sabbath: see reply one (1) above

The Sabbath is not required of all nations... It is required of God's People as a *sign to all* nations. Born again believers in Messiah Yeshua are (spiritually) grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel and are therefore very much a part of God's People. The Sabbath, like any of the Commandments, should never be regarded as a law to be observed, rather as a God ordained opportunity to celebrate the Goodness of the Creator ("*...if you love me you will keep my commandments!*")

The Ten Commandments are part of a whole legal system for Israel... Most Western civilizations have built their legal systems and civic structures based on the Ten Commandments. There is absolutely no validity in the argument, that the Sabbath Commandment represents the entire sabbatical structure of Israel, and should therefore be rejected. Ya'akov (James) makes it clear that the disciple of Yeshua cannot choose, which Commandment he/she wants to observe or not. Anyone who will rely on keeping the commandments to make himself acceptable to God, but breaks even one, will be regarded as having broken all. One of the clearest statements concerning the validity of the Commandments concerning eternal life comes from Yeshua himself. According to him, ALL COMMANDMENTS played a part in the process of gaining Salvation, i.e. "*...you know the Commandments...*" (Mark 10:17-19).

The Sabbath was the seal of the Mosaic Covenant... It is pure Replacement Theology, which insists that the Sinai Covenant governs Israel's right to the land. It is biblically incorrect to say that Israel's failure to observe all the 613 Mitzvot of Sinai has caused them to permanently forfeit that right. The proponents of this view are ignoring the Prophets, as well as the everlasting Covenant God

made with Abraham, by seeking to replace his natural descendants through Isaac and Jacob (Gen.15:18-19), with the spiritual seed of Yeshua. They also ignore the fact that the land God gave to the descendants of Abraham actually constitutes most of the Middle East. Does that mean that Christians are also the true owners of Iraq, Jordan, Syria, etc.? The Bible never even considers the possibility of natural Israel being replaced by anyone! In fact, according to the Apostle Paul, born again believers are grafts into the '*Good Olive Tree*', to become sharers in the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:11-19), not replacement branches. This *ingrafting* also includes the responsibility to care for the land and its People. It is by faith in Yeshua that Gentiles became '*...fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...*', but this faith will only be actualized if it is met with a **real-life response**. Moses and the prophets foretell a physical return of the natural seed of Abraham to the land they had been driven from (Deut.30:1-6; Isa. 40:1 ff.; Ch. 60-66; Jer. 29:13-14; Ezek.36:22-24; Zeph.3:20). The promised restoration of physical/national Israel to the land given to Abraham is a clear teaching in the Hebrew Bible and therefore an undeniable hope for all Jewish people. This promise is as important to them as the Resurrection is for the followers of Yeshua. It is exactly the same God Who raised Yeshua from the dead, Who promised a full restoration to the physical descendants of Jacob. To claim otherwise is ignoring the Scriptural evidence and deliberately closing of one's eyes to the truth.

Mere shadows... Paul's argument in Col.2:16 is against the prevailing legalisms of Pharisaic/Rabbinic Judaism at the time of the second temple. There was nothing revealed in this statement that the weekly Sabbath was abolished under the New Covenant. In fact, it may just as easily be read as a polemic against those who

demand of Jewish believers, or Gentiles for that matter, NOT to follow the Biblical traditions.

Yeshua declared Himself the Master of the Sabbath...

Yeshua never said that he considered the weekly Sabbath obsolete. Rather, he said that the Sabbath was made for man— not the other way around.¹⁶ What Yeshua spoke out against was not the Sabbath, but the legalistic interpretation of the Torah's demands concerning the Sabbath. What the proponents of this view forget is that Yeshua modified aspects of the Oral Torah. *"You have heard that it was said..., but I tell you...!" (Matt. 5:17-48)*. However, the modifications did not include the abolition of any of its parts, rather the admonition that everything we do for God, or man, needs to be done from the heart— in fact from a circumcised heart.¹⁷ Each of the six *"...but I tell you!"* sayings recorded in the 'Sermon on the Mount – as does the discussion with the rich ruler - reveal an intensification of the Commandments. It is therefore safe to say that the abolition of anything that God commanded was far from the Master's mind and heart.

Actually, a major issue concerning the designation of *Lord (meaning YHWH)*, as a title for Jesus, is closely linked with all this.

The term Lord comes from the Greek word κυριος (kurios) and is applied to God (Matt.1:20) designating the Tetragrammaton

¹⁶ The argument that because Yeshua fulfilled the 'Law' (Torah), the same is now no longer applicable, runs aground in Yeshua's own words in Matth.3:15 '... Yeshua answered and said to him, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness"* '. Are we to assume since **all righteousness** was fulfilled through His baptism, that righteousness was now done away with? Nothing could be further from the truth! A close examination of our Bible translations will reveal that various translators have applied different rules throughout, thus yielding a document, which tends to be quite ambiguous in parts and therefore sometimes may lead to unhappy misinterpretations of the biblical texts.

¹⁷ Deut.10:16; 30:6; John 3:3,10. Because God is Spirit, He seeks those who will worship Him in spirit and in Truth— John 4:23-24.

YHWH, as well as to Yeshua (Jn.14:8), but where it is obviously intended to mean Master (Hebr. Adon – c/f Ps.110:1). The problem arises in the Septuagint (LXX) where the Greek does not possess a term equal to the Hebrew YHWH, therefore fails to differentiate between YHWH and Adoni, and applies the term *kurios* to both. Thus we read in Ps.110:1, ‘*The kurios said to my kurios...*’, which may give the uninitiated the impression that YHWH is speaking to YHWH— an assumption which is often expressed by Christian preachers trying to establish a case for the Divinity of Yeshua. Consequently, since the New Testament uses the term *kurios* liberally for both God as well as for Yeshua, it is commonly assumed, that this is what is really meant by the author of this Psalm.

However, from the context of the general application of *kurios* in the New Testament (Matt.12:8; Mk.2:28; Lk.6:5 et al) it is clear that a global translation of the term as YHWH is neither warranted nor acceptable – in fact to do so is dishonest and grossly misleading

The claim by Christian theologians, that *kurios* is the equivalent of YHWH in each and every occurrence of the word in the New Testament, must therefore be rejected on etymological grounds— as well as from a cultural/religious basis. It is unthinkable that any of Yeshua’s disciples would ever have addressed him as YHWH. There is absolutely no possibility that the common people of Galilee, Samaria, Judea or the surrounding countries would have regarded Yeshua to be YHWH— when they called him *kurios*.

Consequently, a study of the application of *kurios* throughout the New Testament reveals that much misleading theology has been produced over the years by attempting to read something into

the texts that is most definitely NOT there. There is obviously a secondary meaning to *kurios*, which seems to be *Master*—reflecting the Hebrew word *Adon(i)* from Psalm 110.¹⁸ Therefore, those who argue that Yeshua changed the Sabbath because he declared himself to be '*kurios*' of the Sabbath have no justification to establish an exclusive link of *kurios* to the Tetragrammaton. Nevertheless, it is a very difficult issue for the readers of the New Testament to know when *kurios* means master and when to apply the Tetragrammaton. Not surprisingly, the same dilemma exists with the usage of the Greek word *nomos* translated as *law*, when it should be rendered as Torah.

Validation

The Apostle Paul makes it very clear throughout his writings that no amount of '*law keeping*' can make anyone right before God. Included in this are of course observances of Holy Days and Sabbaths! At the same time, Paul makes it quite clear that we are not to judge one another by what one observes or not observes, eats or does not eat (Romans 14:1-10). Does that not tell us that if a brother feels that he wants to honour God by observing the Sabbath, others should not stand in judgment over him; in the same way, he should not judge those who want to observe a different day, on which they want to worship God more intensely.

Bearing this in mind, I believe that I have a point in saying that if one were to choose a day, on which Christians should honour

¹⁸ Adon is the Hebrew word for master/lord; the ending i is an appended suffix indicating the pronoun my. The question remains with us which language was spoken by Yeshua and the people of his day: Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek.

What About the Sabbath?

God corporately, why not select the day the Almighty had chosen for Himself in the first place? Moreover, could we not say the same for other traditional Christian non-biblical celebrations as well, or at least permit those who see (non-salvific) merit in commemorating Biblical events, to follow the guiding of their hearts?!

The Bible makes about 112 references to the Sabbath in the T^enakh, and 76 in the New Covenant writings. For instance, Paul did MOST of his teaching on the Sabbath, and not once is he recorded as saying that the Sabbath was superseded by worship on the First Day of the week. Throughout the history of the church, there is ample global evidence that Christians felt that they should honour the biblical Sabbath.¹⁹

There is, however, one passage in Acts (20:7), which *appears* to endorse the change from Sabbath to Sunday worship/fellowship gatherings by the Early Church. This particular passage is the most common '*proof text*' that Christians, already in Paul's day and with his approval, came together to worship on the First Day of the week— rather than on the seventh. I want to show you that, due to an indifference to Biblical time frames by the early translators of the Scriptures, a misunderstanding resulted in a '*Cast Iron*' and infallible doctrine that Sunday was the true Day of Worship. A major factor, contributing to this error, is that there are many Evangelical

¹⁹ Yeshua called Himself Master of the Sabbath (Matt.12:8; Mk.2:27-28; Lk.6:5), which is taken by many to mean that He had the right to abolish the Jewish Sabbath. May I suggest that the Gr. word *kyrios*, which is translated as Lord (understood by many if not most to mean YHWH) in relation to Yeshua, would in many cases be better translated as Master. Yeshua clearly stated elsewhere that his purpose was not to abolish the Torah or any of the Commandments, but to complete them. When he told his listeners that he was Master of the Sabbath, and that the Sabbath was made for man— not the other way around, he was indicating to them that he understood the true meaning of the Sabbath— not his intention to abolish the commandment concerning the day.

commentators who claim without evidence of any kind, in order to provide conclusive proof for the Sunday theory, that Luke used Roman time frames in describing the Ephesus incident.

I believe that Luke did not depart from an Hebraic framework in describing times. Clear support for my claim can be found in the Greek text of Acts 10:30; viz. ‘...ἀπὸ τετάρτης ἡμέρας ‘ (*‘...from the fourth day...’*).

However, when we look at our English versions, this passage is translated unanimously as, ‘...*four days ago*...’. Now, on the surface this may not mean much to our English minds. For the Hebrew though, it means the difference of one day. We have a similar Hebraism in John’s Gospel (2:1) where he describes the wedding at Cana. Again, what does ‘*the third day*’, without any qualifiers, mean to us? Precious little! However, translated into Hebrew terminology, it means that the wedding was on a Tuesday—**the third day** of the week.

What is so special about a wedding on the third day?

Since John mentions the Tuesday wedding, the practice appears to be very ancient and a strong point of identification for Jewish people. For much of Jewish history, getting married on Tuesday is believed to bring special blessings, because in the Biblical story of creation, the phrase "God saw that it was good" appears twice on the third day. John is indicating to his readers that Yeshua was part of an orthodox Jewish/Hebrew community, very much in touch with his people and not necessarily at war with

ALL traditions.²⁰

Since Luke uses ordinal numbers without any other qualification, the Hebrew (Jewish) reader of the text would recognize a Hebrew time frame. Therefore, we can know that Cornelius had the vision on a Wednesday and Simon Kepha arrived in Caesarea the following Sabbath.

If therefore, Luke used a Hebrew time frame in Acts 10:30, we have no reason NOT to assume that he would also do so a few chapters further on.

So, let us briefly look at the passage in Acts 20!

'Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutyches, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even until daybreak, he departed. And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted'. Acts 20:7-12

²⁰ According to Luke 4:16 it was the *custom* of Yeshua to visit the local Synagogue. It would seem from at least one other passage in Luke (4:31) that the Saviour had a high regard for the Sabbath. If He expected His followers to change the Sabbath of His people to the first day of the week, why did He never, ever raise that possibility during His teaching career. May I suggest that it never occurred to Him, for to suggest to His people the abolition of the weekly Sabbath would have clearly stamped Him as a breaker of Torah.

'Now on the first day of the week.' It is important to consider that Luke wrote this report in Acts 20 from a Hebrew perspective and within a totally Hebrew time frame. According to Scripture, the Hebrew day begins at sunset— not in the middle of the night as stipulated by our modern calendar. One also needs to bear in mind that at the time of Yeshua, the Romans did not have names for the days of the week. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the time of Constantine (c. 325 A.D.), the familiar Hebrew-Christian week of seven days, beginning on Sunday, became conflated with the pagan week and took its place in the Julian calendar that was in use until the 16th C.²¹ From Constantine onward, Christians seem to have taken it for granted that the week, now observed by Rome, was seamless with the seven-day week of the Bible— even though its pagan roots were obvious in the names of the days: Saturn's day, Sun's day, Moon's day, etc. The other days take their equally pagan names in English from a detour into Norse mythology: Tiw's day, Woden's day, Thor's day, and Fria's day.²²

'Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.' From this passage, it is relatively easy for us to discern the time factor from this passage. How? According to the Bible, the day begins at sunset, contrary to the Roman calendar. Therefore, as I said above, we can be reasonably certain that Luke is writing within a Hebrew time frame and that this event took place on a Saturday evening. Why? Simply because if it was a Sunday (first day), as many assume, it would have been already Day Two according to Hebrew reckoning, since it was after sunset because lamps were already burning! In other

²¹ *conflate*: to fuse or amalgamate two themes/theories

²² See Appendix

words, what the text really tells us is that Paul preached until midnight on Saturday. Many, however, take the '*midnight*' reference here as a clue that Luke used Roman reckoning.

'...and talked a long while, even until daybreak, he departed!' Paul departed from these Ephesian Christians still on the first day, but now Sunday morning, after an incredibly eventful night.

Why did these disciples come together to break bread at the beginning of the First Day— i.e. in the evening? The practice seems to indicate that we are dealing here with a Jewish congregation. Being Jewish, they would have gathered in the Synagogue (or some other designated place) at that time to give thanks for the Sabbath. It is important to note that the Apostle Paul saw fit to visit Synagogues every Sabbath in all the places he passed through to preach the Good News concerning the crucified, yet risen Messiah (c/f. Acts 13:14, 42,44; 16:13; 18:14) and the Kingdom of God. Among the Jewish People, it is practice to celebrate the end of the Sabbath and to welcome the new week, i.e. *Motza'e Shabbat* (Departure of the Sabbath).²³ The celebration is called *Havdalah* and held about 45 minutes after sundown by lighting a special candle, the drinking of a glass of wine and a recitation of blessings. The followers of Yeshua had another good reason, and that was to celebrate the resurrection. By observing the Sabbath, they offered acceptable worship to the God of their fathers and, while celebrating *Havdalah* also commemorated the Resurrection with a meal and sharing the Word of God – A New Beginning!

²³ David Stern, *Complete Jewish Bible*, c/f Acts 20:7

What About the Sabbath?

The challenge that lies before us here concerning the Sabbath, is the question: are we following and obeying the Word of God (i.e. *'...it is written'*) or are we following the traditions of men? Simply because there is not one shred of evidence in the Bible, of Yeshua or any of the Apostles, commanding anyone to abolish the Biblical Sabbath.

The followers of Yeshua continued to observe the seventh day (Saturday) as holy for centuries after the resurrection of Yeshua. However, key leaders in the Christian movement advocated a change from a Saturday observance to worship on the Lord's Day (Sunday). *Ignatius* (martyred between CE 98 - 117) is claimed to be the first known Christian writer to advocate replacing the Sabbath with the Lord's Day (*Ignatius to the Magnesians 9:1*).

First day observance, on Sunday, became compulsory in the Catholic (Roman) and then later the Orthodox (Greek) churches with the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century. It is most interesting to note that the Reformers, despite claiming the Bible as their Sole Authority (*Sola Scriptura*) never bothered to question the veracity of Sunday worship.

In fact, the Catholic Church declares that,

"Protestants, who accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and religion, should by all means go back to the observance of the Sabbath. The fact that they do not, but on the contrary observe Sunday, stultifies them in the eyes of every thinking man. We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible, we have the authority of the Church, as a rule to guide us... We accept her change of the Sabbath to Sunday... It is always somewhat laughable, to see

What About the Sabbath?

Protestant churches, in pulpit and legislation, demand the observance of Sunday, for which there is nothing in their Bible."

Catholic Church Extension Society, Peter Kraemer, 1975

No doubt, someone will declare here that the observance of the seventh day Sabbath is nothing less than opening the backdoor into Judaism. Indeed, if such a day is decreed by a law, I could not agree more. However, those, who argue that way, forget that to legislate any day as essential for being in right relationship with God is to fall straight back into the very legalism they are seeking to avoid.

Therefore, enforced Sunday keeping because one is a Christian, is no less legalistic than legislated seventh day Sabbath keeping! Please bear in mind, that attendance at Sunday services was usually seen as a measure of one's commitment to God. It is only in recent times that the compulsory Sunday-worship rule for 'true' Christians has been somewhat relaxed and non-attendance at the local church is not immediately regarded as synonymous with being backslidden.

Please bear in mind that the Judaism prior to the Christian era had shaped the people into slaves of the Sabbath through a myriad of miniscule rules and observations to preserve the sanctity of the day. When Yeshua declared Himself to be master of the Sabbath, and that '*...the Sabbath was made for man—NOT man for the Sabbath!*' he attempted to turn people away from a legalistic Sabbath observance, not from the Sabbath itself. As Isaiah (Ch.58) teaches, the Sabbath was intended as a blessing and a time of delight—*NOT* a burdensome task; a time of healing and restoration, not an imprisonment of spirit, soul and body through rules and regulations! Romans 8:12-21 echoes Isaiah's declaration where

What About the Sabbath?

Paul declares that, '*...all creation is longing for the revelation of the sons of God!*' Sabbath observance was a blessing for the Jewish people, irrespective of how legalistic it may have been for some, for it kept and distinguished them as a people for 2000 years! At the same time, the Sunday has become a significant day in the Gentile world for shopping, sport and the pursuit of all types of recreation. It is no longer a day set apart for the God of Creation, but for the hedonistic gods of personal pleasure.

The Biblical Sabbath continually focuses our attention back to our Creator and his re-creative power in our lives. In the tempestuous turmoil of our lives, the Sabbath is a refuge where man may enter for refreshment. The Sabbath is a time of detachment from the world and a re-attachment to the Spirit of God.

the Sabbath
points
implicitly both
at Sinai and to
Creation

The Sabbath is the catalyst that was/is intended to keep humankind's relationship with the Creator a priority. Another benefit in choosing to rest on this day, perhaps, would be a refreshing for the whole person, enabling one to face the busy-ness and frustration in the ever accelerating tempo of modern life.

Many people today do not believe in God or Creation, choosing instead theories of evolution. Such wrong beliefs would disappear if people remembered the Sabbath. I also believe that the Sabbath of the Jewish people is a thorn in everyone's side because the Sabbath points implicitly both at Sinai and to Creation. Do away with the Jewish people and those reminders are also gone!

However, Isaiah the prophet, in chapter 66:23, states the

Sabbath will continue forever.²⁴

God established two blessings at Creation, marriage and the Sabbath. Christian theology holds the view that the Sabbath was abolished with the death and Resurrection of Yeshua. However, there is sufficient Biblical evidence to show that Yeshua no more brought an end to the Sabbath, than he did to marriage. If Yeshua had the intention to abolish the Sabbath, he certainly did not brief his followers terribly well. Please consider this brief episode: at the time of his burial, we find two women busy with embalming preparations. When they finished with their preparations, Luke tells us, they rested—in accord with the Commandment (Luke 23:56). It is therefore safe to say that they either never heard Jesus preach the abolition of the Sabbath, or they simply ignored him, in obedience to the Word of God!

May I suggest therefore, that since Yeshua spoke strongly against removing even the least Commandment, the abolition of the Sabbath never entered his mind, or the minds of his closest followers.

Some theologians say that the mention of the Sabbath in the second chapter of Genesis is purely incidental and unconnected with the decree of Sinai. This argument is invalid because God instituted marriage in the same time frame as He blessed the Sabbath (Gen.2:24; c/f. Matt.19:4-6).

The concept of marriage therefore, as a social and moral institution, was already well established by the time Moses received the Commandments at Sinai. The basis for human marriage was laid down in Genesis when God created woman, but apart from that

²⁴ Isaiah ch.56-58

What About the Sabbath?

occasion, is never again mentioned in the same form in the Hebrew Bible. Yet, marriage is a concept that is deeply ingrained into the fabric of human society – irrespective of culture or race. So, in consideration of the above, how do we decide which of God's injunctions are valid for all humanity— and which are only for the Jewish people?

There is a considerable inconsistency in the way Christian theology deals with the Sabbath and also with marriage. On the one hand, because the earthly Sabbath is the shadow of a greater Sabbath to come, the Biblical Sabbath is considered obsolete. On the other hand, Yeshua declared that in the world to come men and women would no longer be given in marriage (Matt.22:30; Mk.12:25; Lk.20:34-35), yet, no-one would dare to suggest that marriage is no longer necessary! So why is it, that if the Biblical Sabbath is only a shadow of things to come, as the everlasting rest in Messiah, do we not apply this same theological principle to marriage, which is a shadow of our eternal marriage to the Lamb?

Furthermore, how does non-observance of the Biblical Sabbath make a person free in the Messiah? Why is it, that a complete rejection of the fourth commandment, by Christianity, has become a symbol of liberty, while any disregard of the other nine commandments (*i.e. idolatry, adultery or murder*) is labeled as sin?

As alluded to above, there is a tendency among Christians to label a Seventh day (Saturday) Sabbath observance as legalism.

This, however, is ironic, because it is on and through the Sabbath, that we learn to cease from our work and rest in Yeshua's work he did on our behalf (*Hebrews 4:9*). Why do Christians generally insist on Sunday worship, but frown on those who would

come together on other days— if there is no significant day on which Christians should worship? Is this not the same legalism Sabbath keepers are being accused of? And again, what did Yeshua mean when He said that ‘...*the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath!*?’ Why would He want to do away with it if God made it for humankind? God gave the seventh day Sabbath to the human race, but for one reason or another, we decide that Sunday is preferable!

I would like to close this section by drawing your attention to the fact that when Paul pointed to the Scriptures as a teaching tool, he did not have the New Testament in mind (2 Tim.3:16). At the same time, if we look for the theology of Yeshua, we need to turn to the synoptics, especially to Matthew and again we find ourselves being pointed to the Hebrew Scriptures. Would it therefore not be profitable for every Christian to pay close attention to the teachings of the T^enach—, which includes the Sabbath!

Conclusion

The Biblical seventh day Sabbath is an integral part of the Commandments given to Moses on Mt Sinai. However, the 4th commandment is, like the other nine of the Decalogue, more than a mere rule to keep in order to appease the Deity. It is part of the Moral Code of the universe that HaShem revealed for the first time to the human race since the fall of Adam.²⁵ If I am correct in what I am suggesting here, then the question concerning the applicability

²⁵ Frank Selch, *Torah: Divine Instructions, or Mosaic Law*, (Brisbane: The Olivetree Connection: 2006), p.69 ff.

of the 4th Commandment to the human race is superfluous. James correctly says, that ‘... *He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder...”*’ (2:6). In other words, it is immaterial which commandment we transgress against, it is a transgression against the whole. According to Yeshua, all the commandments are tied up in two statements, a) to love God with all of our hearts and b) to love our fellowman to the same extent that we want to be loved. If we follow these injunctions, then we have nothing to worry about, but if we begin to select which Commandments we are obligated to keep and which we are not, then I feel we are beginning to skate on very thin ice.

The moral code is designed for the good of all. Therefore, to transgress even only against a small part of it must have detrimental effects for all.

But there is a problem...!

The observance of the Biblical Sabbath, in the Gentile world, can at best be no more than a private act of devotion based on personal tradition. Why?

Firstly, the Sabbath is closely linked with public worship and recognition of the Creator. In order for a Sabbath observance to function properly, there needs to be a community of believers in close proximity of a common place designated to worship and the study of the Word of God. Sadly though, the parish of yesteryear has given way to the ‘scattered’ church with members often living tens of miles apart involving hours of travel and considerable stress for families with children.

Secondly, as the above clearly demonstrates, that not only does this scenario preclude walking to a place of assembly, but it

also restricts fellowship to a high degree. Therefore, if any Gentile seeks to set the seventh day aside a Sabbath unto YHWH, he must do so out of a personal heart conviction and the knowledge that few Christians will follow him in such an observance in the foreseeable future.

Indeed, to legislate an observance of the seventh day Sabbath runs contrary to the express teaching of Paul concerning freedom of spirit in Messiah.²⁶ Whatever is not of the Spirit is law and therefore unacceptable before God. Some Christian teachers emphasize that the Old Covenant should not be mixed with the New, because in their view, the Old Covenant is 'law' and the New Covenant is Spirit. Despite their unquestioned sincerity, their teaching fails to take into account that the Torah has always been a matter of the Spirit—which is the heart. Although the Torah clearly incorporates *Law*, ordinances and statutes, it was, is and will forever remain a document that aims at the heart.

Persistence in a legalistic observance of any religious ordinance, will not lead to rest, either now or in the Kingdom! In my view, this needs to be applied to Sunday observance in the same sense.

All, who trust the Biblical Gospel for their salvation, will agree that obedience to the Word of the God, in faith and love, is the essential basis of true faith (Matt. 7:21-28; 13:19; Col. 3:16; Rom. 10:17; John 12:48; 2 John 7-9; I Tim. 6:3).²⁷ As Yeshua said, it is truth that will set us free!

²⁶ Anthony Buzzard, in *The Law, the Sabbath and New Testament Christianity*

²⁷ The reader is encouraged to compare several translations for greater clarity, because the translators have used the terms God and Christ interchangeably and thereby compromised the meaning.

What About the Sabbath?

Therefore, no true believer needs ever to be afraid of the truth, but every believer should have a burning zeal for truth! How tragic it is to observe the damage done to God's people (be they Jewish or Christian), when tradition overpowers the word of God and God's people prefer the well-trodden path of tradition to truth!

Was it not **tradition** that chose to kill the Son of God, rather than investigate itself?

There is no doubt in my mind and heart that the seventh day Sabbath is an eternal law and of special significance to the children of Israel and their physical descendants today.

There can be no question as to the apparent validity of arguments that stand against a seventh-day Sabbath observance by Christians. However, I believe that the Scriptural argument for an observance is much greater if ALL Scripture is taken into account and a Hebraic context is maintained. A major pillar of support comes to us in the form of the Apostle Sha'ul's (Paul) pen in his letter to the Ephesian Church; viz. *'...you were without Messiah, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua, you, who once were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Messiah...'* Eph.2:12-13. What Sha'ul is saying here is that for the people of God there is now only the Commonwealth of Israel and the Torah governs this Commonwealth. Rather than abolishing the Torah for the Gentiles, the grafting in process unified Jews and Gentiles under one rule, namely YHWH.

The seventh day Sabbath is, in most respects no different to any other Commandment— its observance is a matter of the heart.

What About the Sabbath?

However, there is a great blessing attached to the observance of the Sabbath. The Jewish people observed the Sabbath throughout the 2000-year long dispersion among the Gentiles and many died for it at the hands of Christians. Their minute attention to all the Rabbinic Sabbath rules and rituals was seen as excessively fanatical. However, the reality is that it was the Sabbath that kept them a people despite the most horrendous persecutions and pogroms ever endured by a religious/racial entity.

The Christian world has all but abandoned the sanctity of their Sunday and the consequence is a re-assimilation, or re-absorption into a godless, pagan humanity.

The Sunday may be irretrievably lost to a hedonistic paganism that is making its way into Christian places of worship with big strides. There is however, still an open door to set aside the Sabbath of the Bible as our Creator intended.

May I commend this booklet to you as an invitation to think deeply on this issue in the name of the One who called himself the Master of the Sabbath, Yeshua, Son of Go-d and Messiah!

Shabbat Shalom!

What About the Sabbath?

Appendix

The Days of the Week

The names of the Weekdays days are in some cases derived from Teutonic deities or, such as in Romance languages, from Roman deities. The early Romans, around the first century, used Saturday as the first day of the week. As the worshipping of the Sun increased, the Sun's day (Sunday) advanced from position of the second day to the first day of the week (and Saturday became the seventh day).

Sunday

The name comes from the Latin *dies solis*, meaning "sun's day": the name of a pagan Roman holiday. It is also called *Dominica* (Latin), the Day of God. The Romance languages, languages derived from the ancient Latin language (such as French, Spanish, and Italian), retain the root.

French: *dimanche*; Italian: *domenica*; Spanish: *domingo*
German: *Sonntag*; Dutch: *zondag*. [Both: 'sun-day']

Monday

The name comes from the Anglo-Saxon *monandaeg*, "the moon's day". This second day was sacred to the goddess of the moon.

French: *lundi*; Italian: *lunedì*. Spanish: *lunes*. [from Luna, "Moon"]
German: *Montag*; Dutch: *maandag*. [both: 'moon-day']

Tuesday

This day was named after the Norse god Tyr. The Romans named this day after their war-god Mars: *dies Martis*. French: *mardi*; Italian: *martedì*; Spanish: *martes*.

Days of the Week

The Germans call it *Dienstag* (meaning "Assembly Day"), in The Netherlands it is known as *dinsdag*, in Denmark as *tirsdag* and in Sweden *tisdag*.

Wednesday

The day named to honor Wodan (Odin).

The Romans called it *dies Mercurii*, after their god Mercury. French: *mercredi*; Italian: *mercoledì*; Spanish: *miércoles*. German: *Mittwoch*; Dutch: *woensdag*.

Thursday

The day named after the Norse god of thunder- Thor. In the Norse languages this day is called *Torsdag*.

The Romans named this day *dies Jovis* ("Jove's Day"), after Jove or Jupiter, their most important god. French: *jeudi*; Italian: *giovedì*; Spanish: *jueves*.

German: *Donnerstag*; Dutch: *donderdag*.

Friday

The day in honor of the Norse goddess Frigg.

In Old High German this day was called *frigedag*. To the Romans this day was sacred to the goddess. Venus, and was known as *dies veneris*. French: *vendredi*; Italian: *venerdì*; Spanish: *viernes*.

German: *Freitag*; Dutch: *vrijdag*.

Saturday

This day was called *dies Saturni*, "Saturn's Day", by the ancient Romans in honour of Saturn. In Anglo-Saxon: *sater daeg*. French: *samedi*; Italian: *sabato*; Spanish: *sábado*. German: *Samstag*; Dutch: *zaterdag*. Swedish: *Lördag*; and in Danish and Norse: *Lørdag* ("washing day").

The Sabbath Commandment

Exodus 20:8-11

“**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy** (do not neglect, ignore or forget it, set it apart from the other days of the week).⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates.¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

“ **Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy** (to set it apart) , as the Lord your God commanded you.¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work,¹⁴ but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.¹⁵ And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.“

Days of the Week

It is important to note that in the Exodus version the reference is clearly to God’s rest at the end of Creation week. There is no mention of Egypt and slavery. However, in Deuteronomy the Commandment sets the Sabbath apart as a celebration of commemoration AND freedom; slaves had no time to rest – free men do, because even God rested once His work was done!

Excerpt from the R.C. Catechism

Ten Commandments - Bible	Ten Commandments - Roman Catholicism
1. You shall have no other gods before me.	1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anytin in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.	2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.	3. Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.	4. Honour your father and your mother
5. Honour your father and your mother	5. You shall not murder
6. You shall not murder	6. You shall not commit adultery
7. You shall not commit adultery	7. You shall not steal
8. You shall not steal	8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour	9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's house, you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is your neighbour's	10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

Note: *If the 2nd Commandment was removed with a clear conviction that it was superfluous, then it would have been unnecessary to fill up the number ten by splitting the tenth*