

The Sabbath and the Covenants

A Refutation of Sabbatarian Theology

By Chris White

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Chapter 1 – Intro and Easily Dismissed Objections

The Sabbath is one of the most important concepts in the bible, and it is also one of the most theologically complex. To gain a full understanding of its significance and purpose you really need to undertake a comprehensive study of the entire Bible, especially in relation to the so-called covenants that God makes with man.

What I am about to explain in this study will take some time, but I encourage you to stay with me, because the reason there is so much confusion among Christians about the Sabbath is only because many Christians, especially new ones, have never heard what I am about to share with you.

Before I get into this study I think it would be good to answer some of the easily dismissed things that people say about the Sabbath first, because they can be unnecessary hindrances to the following study.

The Sabbath day is on the seventh day of the week, which is Saturday. It always has been, and few Bible teachers would disagree with this; however, some people have been taught the reason Christians meet on Sunday, the first day of the week, is because they believe that Sunday is the new Sabbath day. In other words, that the Sabbath day has been changed from the seventh day to the first day. They are told that Christians believe this because Constantine made an edict declaring that Christians in Rome should not work on Sunday in the year 321.

The real reason that Christians have always met on Sunday has nothing to do with Constantine, the Catholic Church, or surprisingly, even the Sabbath itself.

The early Christians referred to Sunday, the first day of the week as the “Lord’s Day,” and the reason they met, ate together, and worshiped the Lord on the first day of the week was for two very good Biblical reasons.

The first was that Sunday was the day that Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention that the empty tomb was found.

Mar 16:1 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.

Mar 16:2 And very early in the morning **the first day of the week**, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Mar 16:3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Similar passages can be found in Matthew 28:1 and Luke 23:55, 24:2.

The other Biblical reason that early Christians met on the first day of the week was because of the Sunday appearances of the resurrected Christ.

After Jesus rose from the dead there were 40 days before He ascended into heaven, during that time Scripture records seven times in which He appears to His disciples. On five of those occasions the Bible goes out of its way to tell us that He met with them on the first day of the week, which is Sunday. The other two times no day is mentioned.

Here is an example:

John 20:19 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.

There are many other first day appearances of the resurrected Jesus. For further study of these passages see the references on the screen or in the notes:

Mt. 28:8-10, Mk. 16:9-13, 16:14-18, Lk. 24:13-33, 24:34, 24:36-44, Jn. 20:11-18, 19-23, 26-29.

During these first day appearances Jesus allowed himself to be worshipped, He ate meals with His disciples; He commissioned them, breathed the Holy Spirit on them, and taught them. These are some of the reasons that the early Church met together to eat, worship and learn from the Scriptures on Sunday.

It is also very clear, as we will see from the early writings of the Church Fathers, that the tradition of the Lord's day on Sunday was being kept by the brand-new church hundreds of years before Constantine, but there is also a lot of Biblical evidence that they had begun this tradition in the Biblical times as well. For example:

Act 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.

This passage specifically mentions Paul's preaching as well as a fellowship meal occurring on Sunday. Also in 1 Corinthians 16 verses 1-2 it says:

1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

1Co 16:2 **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.

Paul instructs the Corinthian church here, as he apparently instructed the Galatian churches before this, to lay up an offering for those experiencing famine in Jerusalem, and to do it on the first day of the week. There would appear to be no other reason for him to mention the day to do this unless they were already meeting regularly on that day.

And in Revelation 1 verse 10 we find this passage:

Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit **on the Lord's day**, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,
Rev 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book....

Here we have a mention of the "Lord's day" by John, and we know from the early Church Fathers like Ignatius of Antioch who was a student of the Apostle John, that the Lord's day was referring to the day the Lord rose from the dead, i.e. Sunday. He said the following:

"If therefore, those who were brought up in the **ancient order of things** that have come to the possession of a **new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath**, but living in the observance of the **Lord's day**, on which also our life has sprung up again by him and by his death." - Ignatius of Antioch (35 or 50 to 117 AD)

Another Church Father, Justin Martyr, who to give you some context, died about 165 AD, about 150 years before Constantine's edict, said the following after giving a very detailed description of their church services which sound a lot like the ones we have today, he 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 our Saviour on the **same day rose from the dead.**^[1]"

You can find similar statements from early Christians in the centuries before Constantine. The fact is that the reason Christians meet on Sunday has nothing to do with Constantine or the Sabbath and has a strong Biblical basis.

One final easily dismissed idea I would like to address before I get into this study is the Idea that meeting on Sunday is pagan because the name "Sunday" derives from the idea of the "Day of the Sun."

To this person I would ask to consider that root names for the days of the week in English have no bearing whatsoever on this subject. For example, the name Saturday is derived from the Roman god Saturn, and is just as pagan, by that standard, as Sunday. Monday is named for the moon god, Tuesday from the god of the sky Tiew. In fact all the day names in English have pagan backgrounds. So we can see that this argument is one that does not hold water. If you are going to say Sunday is pagan for this reason, you must certainly include Saturday as being pagan as well.

Chapter 2 – Covenants

Now we can move into the study of the Scripture regarding the Sabbath, and particularly what the Sabbath means to a Christian in the New Covenant.

The first thing we need to study if we are going to understand the Sabbath is the very idea of a covenant. The word “*covenant*” means a binding agreement or compact between two or more parties. In legal terms, a covenant basically means an agreement or contract.

There are several legal contracts that God makes with man in the Bible, and they are extremely important. These covenants have some very interesting similarities when they are studied closely.

Let’s take a look at the covenant that God makes with Abraham 430 years before Moses and the Ten Commandments. Because of Abraham’s faith God makes a contract with him which says that He will give him innumerable descendants, and a land, and that through one that would come from his descendants would all the nations of the world be blessed. The New Testament in Galatians 3:16 tells us that this “one” was referring to Jesus.

This covenant with Abraham had what we will see all God’s covenants with man in the Bible have: that is, a sign of the covenant -- an outward sign that signifies that the person was in a covenant. We have something similar with our modern-day marriage covenant -- we wear rings as a sign or to signify our being in a covenant with our spouse.

The sign of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision.

Gen 17:10 This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;

Gen 17:11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, **and it shall be a sign of the covenant** between Me and you.

This contract between God and Abraham was passed down through certain sons of Abraham through a specific blessing, first Isaac, then Jacob and so on.

Four hundred years later, just as God predicted, Abraham’s descendants were enslaved in Egypt where their numbers had grown exponentially. Exodus 2:24 says:

Exodus 2:24 So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His **covenant** with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

God is a faithful God. He acknowledges that He has signed a contract with Abraham, a contract that would ultimately result in a redeemer for the entire human race. He then begins to deliver them from Egypt and lead them to the land he has promised them through Abraham.

The people that he led out of Egypt were the descendants of Abraham, and as such they could be a part of the covenant that God made with Abraham as long as they had faith in God, and were circumcised, but this was all about to change.

During the 40 years that the people were being led from the bondage of Egypt to the Promised Land, they entered into an additional covenant, or contract, with God which is often called the Mosaic covenant, or Sinaitic covenant.

When the children of Israel were camped at Mount Sinai, God spoke to Moses and told him to ask the Children of Israel if they wanted to enter into a new contract with Him.

This contract, as we will see, is typified by the Ten Commandments and the subsequent laws. God told them that if they would obey the terms of this contract they would have great blessings, but if they did not obey these terms there will be curses and even death.

They were given the option to accept or reject these terms. In Exodus 24, after the Commandments, and all the laws and the punishments for breaking those laws had been thoroughly explained, we are told that the Israelites unanimously agreed to the terms of this contract and entered into this covenant with God.

Ex 24:3, 8 So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." ...And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

An interesting side note here is that Christ will later quote this phrase in Exodus, "This is the blood of the covenant," when ratifying the New Covenant, at the Last Supper, which we will see later.

Like the covenant with Abraham, the Mosaic covenant also had a sign, it was Sabbath keeping:

Ex 31:12 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
Ex 31:13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.'

This brings us to a crucial point to understand. The Ten Commandments were the very words of the Mosaic covenant; they were essentially the pages of the contract that the Israelites signed. The Ten Commandments are referred to by Scripture as the embodiment of the whole old covenant as we will see. Yes, there were many other laws given at this time, but those laws were essentially expanding on and interpreting the laws on the tablets.

So, for example, the Ten Commandments say "Thou shalt not steal", but more laws were given between Exodus 20-23, before the ratification of the covenant in Exodus 24. to expand and interpret things like "thou shalt not steal." For example, those other laws explain what should be done if...

- A thief is caught breaking in but doesn't yet steal anything - Ex 22:2-4
- Or If a man gives his neighbor money or articles to keep, and they are stolen out of the man's house - Ex 22:7
- Or what kind of punishment should there be for ox or sheep stealing – Ex 22:1

They all fall under the main commandment: “thou shalt not steal.” They are only applying and interpreting that one law.

The same is true with the Sabbath commandment, the fourth commandment. In that commandment people are told not to work, but the other laws given interpreted and applied this overarching law.

So, for example, other laws told them that they could not cook on the Sabbath, or kindle a fire, or go out of their place. The other laws told them that the Sabbath must be kept from evening to evening. The other laws told them what to do if someone profaned the Sabbath, i.e. they would be put to death, or if they did any work on it that they would be cut off from their people.

This is why Scripture refers to the Ten Commandments as the “words of the covenant.” In other words, the Ten Commandments were the embodiment of the entire Mosaic covenant. I am going to have to quote a number of verses on this point so there can be no doubt in your mind about it, as it is such an important part of our discussion.

Ex 34:28 So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. **And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.**

What was the Mosaic covenant but the very words of the Ten Commandments?

Deu 4:13 So He declared to you **His covenant** which He **commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments**; and He wrote them on **two tablets of stone**.

Deu 9:9 When I went up into the mountain to receive **the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you**, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water.

Deu 9:11 And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me **the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant**.

Deu 9:15 “So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the **two tablets of the covenant** were in my two hands.”

Deu 10:4 And He wrote **on the tablets** according to the first writing, the **Ten Commandments**, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the **day of the assembly**; and the LORD gave them to me.

1Ki 8:9 **Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone** which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

1Ki 8:21 And there I have made a place for the ark, **in which is the covenant of the LORD which He made with our fathers**, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

This is also interesting because it helps us understand why we have this term “Ark of the Covenant.”

These tablets were placed in the Ark of the Covenant which symbolized the agreement that God made with the children of Israel in the desert of Sinai.

So at this point, after the covenant was made at Sinai, the children of Israel were essentially under two covenants: The Abrahamic, with the sign of circumcision, and the Mosaic covenant, with the sign of Sabbath keeping.

A notable point here is that Scripture says that the promise given to Abraham during his covenant with God was much more important than the covenant given through Moses, and that the Ten Commandments covenant was only given “because of transgression,” and that it was meant to expire once the first covenant with Abraham was fulfilled in Christ.

Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “AND TO YOUR SEED,” who is Christ.

Gal 3:17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

Gal 3:18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Gal 3:19 What purpose then does the law serve? **It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come** to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

So it says here in Galatians 3 that the promise given to Abraham was about a future seed or offspring, singular, not plural, which is referring to Christ, and that the Mosaic Law, given 430 years later, did not annul that very important covenant.

When it says “till” the seed should come, What purpose then does the law serve? **It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come,**” it is a reference to the fact that the Mosaic laws had an expiration date, that is that the law would be in effect until the seed would come, which is Christ.

He says that the purpose of the law was essentially to keep everyone on track until the very important promise to Abraham was fulfilled. He says the following a few verses later:

Gal 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Gal 3:24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

The Abrahamic covenant was a covenant based on faith not works:

Rom 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM **BELIEVED GOD**, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

I know that's a lot to take in. So at this point, I would only ask that you take away from this that the promises given to Abraham about how through his line would come a redeemer one day was the most important covenant of the two; and that essentially the Mosaic covenant was added later and for the purpose of ensuring the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. In addition, that the way in which Abraham entered into his covenant, through faith not works, was different from the way that the Mosaic covenant operated, which we will see in a minute.

The idea that the Mosaic covenant was to be replaced by another covenant later on was something that every Scripture-reading Jew should have known about because it was very clearly prophesied by Ezekiel and Jeremiah and others hundreds of years before Christ. Here is one of the most famous prophecies about this.

Jer 31:31 Behold, **the days are coming**, says the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—

Jer 31:32 **not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke**, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

There are a few things I want to point out about this passage:

- 1.) It says the days are coming in which a new covenant would be made. This was hundreds of years after both the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic covenant were instituted, so it must be referring to another covenant besides the two that were already there. We know, because of Hebrews chapter 8 and 9 in the NT. that this is referring to what we call the "new covenant" which is through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 2.) It says: "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." This is obviously talking about the Mosaic covenant, given in the Sinai desert, and it says that this new covenant will be different than that covenant. SO whatever it will be, it will be characterized by a notable difference from the covenant given at Sinai.
- 3.) It says: "My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them." This is one of the many ways to show that the Old Covenant was a conditional one; that is, that it could be broken if the person did not do the things that were required of them in the covenant. It also shows that God considered the Old Covenant to be broken, and so a new one was needed.

This idea that the New Covenant would make the old one unnecessary is echoed by the writer of Hebrews in the New Testament who says the following after quoting the passage we just read in Jeremiah:

Heb 8:13a In that He says, "A NEW COVENANT," He has made the first **obsolete**.

So Scripture confirms that when the new prophesied covenant came it would make the Mosaic covenant "obsolete."

This idea is very consistent in Scripture:

Heb 8:6 But now He [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a **better covenant**, which was established on **better promises**.

Heb 8:7 **For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.**

Heb 8:8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE **A NEW COVENANT** WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH—

And in 2nd Corinthians it says:

2Co 3:6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the **new covenant**, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the **letter kills**, but the Spirit gives life.

2Co 3:7 But if the **ministry of death, written and engraved on stones**, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,

2Co 3:8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

2Co 3:9 For if the **ministry of condemnation** had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

Notice that Scripture contrasts the New Covenant with the Old Covenant which it calls "the ministry of death" and "the ministry of condemnation." It also refers to it as "the letter." This old covenant, which it says is superseded by the new, must be referring to the Ten Commandments as well as all the other laws. We see in verse 7 that it says this covenant was "engraved on stones" an obvious reference to the Ten Commandments, and further shows that the very words of the covenant were the Ten Commandments.

A similar point is made in the book of Romans which also explains why he uses terms like "the ministry of death" to refer to the Ten Commandments:

Rom 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, **you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another**—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Rom 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

Rom 7:6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "**YOU SHALL NOT COVET.**"

First let me point out here that in context here Scripture is comparing our relationship to the Ten Commandments like that of a woman who was married to a husband that has died. It says just before this:

Rom 7:2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

Rom 7:3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

So here in our verse when it says “you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another,” it is saying that the New Covenant replaces the old in the same way that a new husband replaces a dead one - one is not still married to your dead husband in that case; you are released from that marriage to marry another.

It says, “But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”

So we have been delivered from the law, which Scripture again refers to as the Letter which we saw earlier was a reference to the Ten Commandments, and just like in that passage we are not left to guess whether or not the Ten Commandments are being referred to here because in verse 7 an example of the law he is referring to is quoted. It says “YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” a quotation of the tenth commandment. So we know that whatever else this might mean, it also includes the Ten Commandments.

There are many more verses that explain this but I want to get into some of the specific details regarding the New Covenant and the Sabbath most particularly, so I will only quote one more passage and then conclude this section.

It is found in the book of Galatians chapter 4, which compares being under the Old Covenant to being a slave, whereas being in the New Covenant is described as being a son.

Gal 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.

Gal 4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,

Let me stop here to explain this part. Abraham was promised a son by God but he was getting old and had not yet had this promised son. He and his wife thought they would kind of help God along by having Abraham have a child with one of his wife’s servants named Hagar. They named the child Ismael, but later he and his wife miraculously did have their own son, just as God had promised them. This son, Isaac, was the promised son through whom God intended the line of Christ to come.

Scripture continues by saying that these events were symbolic of the Mosaic covenant and the New Covenant. It continues:

Gal 4:24 which things are symbolic. For these are the **two covenants**: the one from Mount Sinai [Mosaic] which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar...

Gal 4:28 Now we [people in the new covenant], brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise...

Gal 4:30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “**CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREEWOMAN.**”

Gal 4:31 So then, brethren, **we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.**

This is how Scripture views the two covenants, the old and the new. The Old Covenant with its Ten Commandments is referred to as “the ministry of death”; it is likened to being a slave and not a son, or being married to a dead man. It is called by Scripture, obsolete and having passed away; it says that we in the New Covenant have been delivered from it, that we have died to it and have been released from it.

I know that many of you are skeptical and have many questions about the Sabbath; I have tried to anticipate many of them and will address the ones that are most common later on. But before I do that I need to talk about the New Covenant in detail because if we really understand what Scripture has to say about it we will have a much better understanding of the Sabbath when we get to it.

The New Covenant is a new agreement that God would make with man. A new arrangement on how one is considered righteous before God. God said through the prophet Jeremiah, that it would be different from the Mosaic Covenant in some distinct ways. We know that this agreement concerns the death of Christ.

Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for **if righteousness comes through the law**, then **Christ died** in vain.”

We will learn more about how the death of Christ brings us righteousness apart from the law in this new covenant later on.

Chapter 3 – The New Covenant

The New Covenant, like the old has signs; these signs replace the signs of the Old Covenant. They are not simply added to the other signs of the other covenants. This is because the New Covenant, as we have seen, replaces the other two covenants. Therefore the signs of the New Covenant replace the signs of the old.

For instance, the sign of circumcision in the Abrahamic covenant, a one-time entrance sign, is replaced by baptism in the New Covenant, which is also a one-time entrance sign, signifying that we will be willing participants in the new arrangement that God has made with man. This is why Jesus places importance on this symbolic practice in the Great Commission:

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Baptism is the new entrance sign for the New Covenant. In Colossians 2 it contrasts circumcision with baptism.

Col 2:11-12 In Him [Jesus] you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by **putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism**, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

The “circumcision of Christ” is “being buried with him in baptism.” Notice also the phrase “putting off the body of sins of the flesh” which here is used in a spiritual sense but has connotations of physical circumcision where flesh was removed from the body. The Apostle Peter also makes a similar statement when he is contrasting circumcision to the new entrance sign of baptism.

1Pe 3:21 **There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism** (not the **removal of the filth of the flesh**, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Here we are told that we now have a new antitype, contrasted with circumcision, which is baptism.

To avoid confusion about this verse it is necessary to explain that, just like circumcision, the old entrance sign, baptism, the new one, is not necessary for salvation but, like Peter says, it is the “answer of a good conscience toward God.”

This is made clear in many places but a very clear one is in Romans chapter 4 where Paul makes the argument that Abraham was accounted righteous by faith first and only later was circumcised:

Rom 4:9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

Rom 4:10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? **Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.**

Rom 4:11 **And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised**, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

Rom 4:12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

To show you how this applies to baptism in the New Covenant, I need to explain the difference between a seal and a sign according to the Bible. The seal is a spiritual thing, that verse 11 tells us Abraham received **before** he was circumcised. This was his righteousness that he attained by believing God. The sign, or the symbolic act of circumcision, was something that he did as an outward symbol to show that he received the seal.

In the New Testament, the seal of God is the receiving the Holy Spirit upon hearing and believing the Gospel.

Eph 1:13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**,
Eph 1:14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Now back to explaining how baptism, the sign of the New Covenant, corresponds to circumcision in that it also is a symbolic act done only after the seal of God (the Holy Spirit in this case) is given. Consider when Peter was preaching to the gentile house of Cornelius. He is shocked to see that God has allowed gentiles to be a part of God's new covenant. He realizes that they have been saved when he sees that they have been given the Holy Spirit through belief in the Gospel message that he preached to them.

What is interesting in this passage is that he says that since they have obviously been saved, he might as well baptize them.

Act 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

Act 10:45 And those of the circumcision [Jews] who believed [Christians] were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because **the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles** also.

Peter then says:

Act 10:47 **"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"**

So the gentiles had been saved before they were baptized, since the Holy Spirit is the seal of God, which guarantees the inheritance of our redemption as Ephesians says. Some more verses about this seal and guarantee are as follows:

2Co 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,

2Co 1:22 who also has **sealed** us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a **guarantee**.

And:

2Co 5:5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us **the Spirit as a guarantee.**

So the gentiles who were sealed with the Holy Spirit in this passage would have gone to heaven if they had died before receiving baptism. In the same way, the thief on the cross, who was not able to perform the sign of baptism, was told by the Lord that he would be in heaven.

So in summary of this point:

- Circumcision was the outward sign of the Old Covenant
- But the seal was attained by Abraham and all true Jews by faith.
- Baptism is the outward sign of the New Covenant
- But the seal of God is the Holy Spirit which only comes also by faith in the believing of the Gospel.

There is also a sign in the New Covenant that corresponds to the Sabbath of the Mosaic covenant. The Sabbath was a remembrance sign, an outward sign to be performed in order to remember something. In the case of the Sabbath it was to remember that God rested on the seventh day of creation. God said to remember the Sabbath day, because it was then that He rested. He says this explicitly in Ex 31:17, Ex 20:11

We will talk more about why remembering God's resting on the seventh day was so important later, but for now just know that it had something to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The new remembrance sign is also all about the Gospel. Jesus told His disciples to do what we call the Lord's Supper in **remembrance** of Him.

1Co 11:24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**"

1Co 11:25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, **in remembrance of Me.**"

1Co 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**

This was a proclamation of the Lord's death. In other words, we would be preaching the Gospel to ourselves every time we did this. Jesus wanted us to continually remind ourselves of the Gospel; that His body was broken for us. In other words, the full measure of the wrath of God for your and my sins was put on him instead of us. For what purpose? The second part of this sign is the purpose: The blood of the New Covenant, the new agreement that God has made with man, which is that He has made a way for your sins to be punished in Christ so that you might be seen as spotless forever, this new spotlessness you receive by faith in Jesus.

Probably the most important aspect of the New Covenant was that in it God was planning on giving us His Spirit in our hearts, and that this Spirit would in some ways do what the law did in

the Old Covenant. Let's look again at some of the prophecies of the New Covenant in the Old Testament in order to understand this better.

Jer 31:32 **not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers** in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

Jer 31:33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;** and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Here God is contrasting the New Covenant with the Law of Moses. He says the New Covenant won't be like the Ten Commandments which He wrote on stone; in the new one He is going to write the law on their hearts. This is speaking of the Holy Spirit.

This connection is too important in our study of the Sabbath not to dwell on for a minute. We need to look at some verses that contrast the law of the Old Covenant with the Holy Spirit.

Rom 8:4 **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us** who do not walk according to the flesh **but according to the Spirit.**

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the **Spirit**, you are not under the law.

2Co 3:6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, **not of the letter** (the law of Moses) **but of the Spirit;** for the letter kills, but the **Spirit** gives life.

Rom 7:6 But now we **have been delivered from the law**, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness **of the Spirit** and not in the **oldness of the letter.**

The reason there is this consistent contrasting of the Spirit and the law is because the Spirit does what the law did in the Old Covenant. The Spirit is now what convicts the person of sin, righteousness and judgment, the things the law did in the Old Covenant.

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [The Holy Spirit] will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

John 16:8 And when He has come, **He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:**

How is this done? The Spirit gives us new desires, it makes us want to do good. And when we do bad, we feel what is known as the conviction of sins, or sometimes it is called the grieving of the Holy Spirit:

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

This is an important verse as it shows us that when we sin, we grieve the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit doesn't leave us when we sin. In fact, in this verse it reiterates that even in the instance of grieving the Holy Spirit we are still considered "sealed for the day of redemption" by it. It's not going anywhere. For a full study about why it makes no theological sense for the Holy Spirit to leave us, and us becoming unsaved every time we sin, see the video I did called Legalism Debunked.

We are being changed from the inside out by the Spirit. It makes us want to do good things. These good desires that develop are called the fruit of the Spirit. And it says plainly that if that new power of the Spirit is working in you that there is no law against you anymore:

Gal 5:22 **But the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Gal 5:23 gentleness, self-control. **Against such there is no law.**

The Spirit is what is causing the fruit to grow, not you. You will stumble and fall on the proverbial tightrope as you are being changed -- part of the process we call sanctification -- but when you do fall, there is a safety net under you to catch you in the New Covenant. And you learn from every fall you have. The great thing is that the Spirit in you also makes you want to get up and get back on the tightrope and try again, and to try to get further than you did last time. It was God's will that His people would be driven by love of Him through the Spirit in the New Covenant, not fear of judgment from the law.

The Last Supper is a very important thing to fully understand in our study, for it is on this occasion that the Lord institutes the New Covenant, though it wouldn't be fully instated until after His death.

If you're not very familiar with the institution of the Old Covenant by God through Moses on Mount Sinai, it is quite possible to miss the full implications of what Jesus was doing at the Last Supper.

We mentioned before that Jesus was essentially quoting from Exodus 24 when He said the words "This is the blood of the covenant" referring to the wine glass at the Last Supper.

If you go back and read that chapter you will find some interesting parallels between the institution of the Old Covenant and the institution of the new.

For instance, in Exodus 24:

- Moses tells the people the law that God had given him.
- The people agree to follow the new laws and be in that covenant.
- They are then sprinkled with the blood of the covenant. This is when Moses says "this is the blood of the covenant."
- Then God told Moses to take a select group of 73 followers up to the mountain and they had a meal with God. (Really, they ate and drank with God, see Exodus 24: 11)

Jesus was doing the same thing at the Last Supper; that is, instituting a covenant. He even gave them a new commandment to follow in their new covenant.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

He gives one other commandment during this meal, which is to believe in Him.

John 14:11 **Believe Me** that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else **believe Me** for the sake of the works themselves.

He commands these two things only a few verses before He says:

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

It was well understood by the writers of the New Testament, such as John, Paul, and James, that this commandment was the New Covenant commandment; they referred to it as the Law of Christ, or the Royal Law. Believing in Him and loving your brother are the only commandments that Jesus ever referred to as His.

John helps us to know that we are on the right track in 1 John when he reiterates that Jesus' commandments were to believe in Him and to love your brother.

1Jn 3:22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep **His commandments** and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

1Jn 3:23 **And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.**

1Jn 3:24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. **And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**

Notice first that John calls the commandments that we must keep, believing in Him and loving one another. This verse is also a good example of how the plural and singular commandment(s) are interchangeable.

Notice also that he says that this is how one knows if we are Christians. This corresponds to the very first mention of the new commandment by the Lord when He said that it would be how the world knows His followers.

This brotherly love commandment of Jesus, which is the new commandment of the New Covenant, is restated directly many times in Scripture. For example it says in 1st John:

1Jn 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

Jesus once again tells us directly in the following verses what His commandment is. This verse is interesting because Jesus contrasts "His" commandment to love your brethren, with His Father's commandments to Him. This is a very difficult verse to get around for the people that want to read into the text that Jesus' commandments were the Ten Commandments instead of what He explicitly tells us it is.

John 15:10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

John 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Every time you see a charge to keep Jesus's commandments in Scripture, keep reading. It will almost always tell you explicitly what His commandment is just like the verse above, and it is to love one another.

It is very clear that the phrase "His" or "my commandments" are only used to refer to what the NT writers called the law of Christ, that is to believe in Him and love one another. Never are they used to refer to the Ten Commandments -- not once.

There is much more to say on this point about Jesus' commandments and their relationship to the Spirit. I did a lengthy presentation on this showing that without a doubt, Jesus does not want us to guess as to what His commandments are in these often misused verses.

If you are concerned about this, please see the notes for an edited version of my video. Legalism Debunked. which is a detailed study on the idea of Jesus' commandments in John. But to sum it up, the new commandments of the New Covenant are belief and love and they are Holy Spirit driven and are the new way in which people will know that you are disciples of His, not like the old way where people would know by your outward law-keeping. This is the very foundation of the New Covenant.

Now we will get into all the details specific to the Sabbath itself. One question that is asked far too little is what was the purpose of the Sabbath according to God? Why was He so serious about people keeping it?

The reason given in the Ten Commandments was that the Sabbath was to remind them that God rested on the seventh day.

Ex 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy...

Ex 20:11a **For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.**

This reason is restated several times in Scripture. God wanted his people to remember that He ceased from His creating work for some reason. He didn't just want them to do this once either; He wanted them to do this every single week. So for some reason His ceasing from His work was important enough to Him to command people to continually remember it. I would suggest that we must find out why that is in order to understand the Sabbath.

The seventh day after creation was the only day in which God and Adam and Eve had before they sinned and everything changed. There are suggestions in Scripture that the conditions that God had with man on that one day, before sin entered, would have continued indefinitely if they had not sinned. It was only on that one day, the seventh day after creation, that God and man had a right relationship apart from the separation of sin.

In a sense the Sabbath day was supposed to be a reminder of the peace that man had with God. They were to rest. As Jesus said, the Sabbath was made for man. It was supposed to be a reminder of freedom from the hard work they had before the fall, hard work that was now part of their fallen world.

The following verses speak of how the conditions related to work changed after the fall.

Gen 3:17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

Gen 3:18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

Gen 3:19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...

In fact, if you look at all the things that the Israelites were to do and not do on the Sabbath, most if not all of them would have been completely meaningless to Adam and Eve before the fall, as they were already doing them, or there was no need to do them.

For example, the law says not to buy or sell on the Sabbath; but Adam and Eve were told to eat *freely* from the garden (Gen 2:16). The law says not to build a fire on the Sabbath; Adam and Eve were in no need of clothes and so certainly a fire was unnecessary. The law says to delight in the Lord on the Sabbath; but Adam and Eve in an un-fallen world would have had no need for anyone to tell them to delight in the Lord on a particular day.

Dale Ratzlaff, in his book *Sabbath in Christ*, says the following of this:

"Israel's observance of the various Sabbath laws of the Sinaitic Covenant seems to be acting out in a sinful world what Adam and Eve did in a sinless world."

God was essentially saying "remember what it was like when there was peace between God and man, before sin entered the world, and when we were in open fellowship with each other". This separation between God and man because of sin was eventually reconciled by Jesus.

Paul starts off his teaching about Adam and how his sin separated us from God at the fall by pointing out that we have now been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. In other words, we have now gained what we lost through Adam and much more.

Rom 5:11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...

This is one of the things that the Sabbath was doing, reminding people of their need for reconciliation with God, but it was not the only thing it was doing.

There were other days that were considered Sabbaths in the law where no work was to be done; these included the seven annual Sabbaths such as Passover and First Fruits, as well as a Sabbath year which occurred every seven years. This is when the land was to receive its rest. There was also another Sabbath called Jubilee. This was to be celebrated every seventh sabbatical year; in other words, every 50 years. This is where slaves were to be set free and redeemed from bondage, debts were to be erased and many other interesting things.

There is actually no record of the Jubilee ever being kept by the Jews in Scripture.

Dale Ratzlaff writes of this:

“There is an underlying sense of freedom in the Sabbath concept, everyone is free from the responsibility of work, the Israelites, the slaves, the foreigners, the animals, even the land itself, there seems to be a rising crescendo in the sabbatical cycle which reaches its peak in the Jubilee.”

Jesus makes a reference to the freedom from captivity in the year of Jubilee, which He called the acceptable year of the Lord, when He quotes from Isaiah at the beginning of His ministry:

Luke 4:18 “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HAS SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED, **TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED;**

Luke 4:19 **TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.”**

Luke 4:20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

Luke 4:21 And He began to say to them, **“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”**

Jesus was going to fulfill the Jubilee Sabbath. He was going to set all of those in bondage free.

Related to this, God said that another purpose of the Sabbath was to remind the Israelites that they had been set free from their bondage in Egypt.

Deu 5:15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. **Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.**

The slavery they suffered under the Egyptian government at that time was terrible and offered no rest from their work.

Ex 2:23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.

This brings us to the final purpose for the Sabbath: to continually point the Jews toward a time in the future when they would be free from the works of the law. This is explicitly stated as the reason for the Sabbath in the New Testament book of Hebrews when it says:

Heb 4:4,10 For he has somewhere spoken **of the seventh day** in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works...**for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.”**

We are to rest from our works, and in context this is talking to Christians who wanted to go back under the Mosaic Law. He is pleading with them to rest from trying to please God through their works of the Old Testament law. He tells them that true rest comes from faith and belief in the good news.

Heb 4:2 For **good news** came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united **by faith** with those who listened.

Heb 4:3 For **we who have believed enter that rest.**

Jesus told people to come to Him for rest and he said this rest was easy; he said it was a light yoke, contrasted with a heavy laden one.

Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.**

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and **ye shall find rest unto your souls.**

Mat 11:30 For **my yoke** is easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus is the Sabbath rest. The Sabbath, along with all the other Jewish rituals, were all pointing to him.

Col 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

Col 2:17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Here we are told that we are not to be judged in regard to our keeping of these OT rituals and that they served as a pointer to Christ for the Jews.

This idea of Jewish rituals like the Sabbath being a shadow is interesting. If someone you love is casting a shadow you would be glad to see that shadow before they actually arrived, but once they did arrive it would be silly to go on hugging the shadow, the person who was casting the shadow was now standing before you! Hug them! There is no longer any need to embrace their shadow. That is what the Pharisees were doing in Jesus day. They wanted to go on hugging the shadow when the Lord of the Sabbath was standing in front of them.

As a side note, I would recommend the book to you *Sabbath in Christ* by Dale Ratzlaff if you have any questions as to whether or not the seventh day Sabbath is in view in this passage in Colossians 2. He included in that book a very technical study by a Bible scholar named Jerry A. Gladson which answers the question definitely as yes.

I think it should be pretty obvious where I am going at this point. That is that Jesus fulfilled the Sabbath which was always pointing to His redeeming us from the law and us resting from our works, and being reconciled to God in a way even better than in Eden. But I have not yet explained exactly how that occurred, nor have I articulated what that means for you and me now. I will address this later, but I think it is time that I should start to answer some common objections to this idea, as the answers will actually help build my case, and lead to my conclusions.

Chapter 4 – Common Objections

Objection 1: “Jesus said in Matthew 5:18 that not one jot or tittle would pass from the law until heaven and earth passed away, and heaven and earth has not passed away yet, so the law has not passed away either.”

I deliberately misquoted Matthew 5:18 here as this verse is often misquoted when this objection is made. I will quote the verse correctly and in context and then discuss why a misquotation is needed to make this objection:

Mat 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, **but to fulfil**.

Mat 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, **till all be fulfilled**.

This quotation is taken from the Sermon on the Mount, a place where Jesus was showing His authority over the law. He said many times “the law says this, but I say this.” He was answering an objection that many people were beginning to have because of His teachings; namely, have you come to do away with the law.

He answers them very plainly in verse 17. He says that He has not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. What can we take from this except that Jesus planned on fulfilling the law? Then in verse 18 He says again very plainly that the jots and tittles of the law will in fact pass away, but not **until** he fulfills them all.

Sometimes people forget this very important “till” as in “till all be fulfilled.” This is not a teaching that the law won’t pass away; this is an explicit teaching that Jesus indeed did plan on the law and the prophets being fulfilled by him -- jots and tittles and all.

We have already noted another very important “till” in Scripture that relates to this:

Gal 3:19a What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, **till** the Seed should come to whom the promise was made...

The law and the prophets had an expiration date. Jesus mission was to fulfill them and thus do away with the righteous requirement of the law:

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

Rom 8:4 **that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled** in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

If you do a word study on the word fulfill that Jesus used in this famous passage, you will see that it is used to denote something that was done once to complete something, and you will also notice that

even by this very early part of His ministry, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had already fulfilled several of the things written about him in the law and the prophets. Here are a few examples, all before Matthew 5, when this statement is made:

Mat 1:22 So all this was done that it might be **fulfilled** which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

Mat 1:23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which is translated, "God with us."

Mat 2:14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,

Mat 2:15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be **fulfilled** which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON."

Mat 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be **fulfilled** which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

In the interest of time I won't quote all the verses that speak of Christ fulfilling some aspect of the Scriptures, but it will suffice to say that even before the Sermon on the Mount Jesus was well on His way to fulfilling the law and the prophets.

But not **all** things you say; Jesus said not until **all** things are fulfilled would the law and the prophets pass. Well, we can actually pinpoint the very moment when Jesus considered that all things were fulfilled.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing **that all things were now accomplished**, that **the Scripture might be fulfilled**, said, "I thirst!"

John 19:29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.

John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "**It is finished!**" And bowing His head, He gave up His Spirit.

So there can be no doubt that Jesus considered all things fulfilled at his death on the cross.

There are more things going on in this verse than meets the eye. It gives me chills to think about all the implications of this.

In the interest of time, I must leave this study to you about why drinking the sour wine, sometimes called vinegar is so important, but I will give you a head start by saying, it was the 4th cup of the Passover meal, the one called The Cup of Praise or Restoration, based on God's statement, "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God."

I also encourage you to do a study of hyssop, mentioned here as the stick that was used to hold the sponge of sour wine. It was first used at the first Passover, to put the blood on the doorposts but it was also used to inaugurate the Old Covenant; here it is used to inaugurate the new with the sour wine being symbolic of the blood of the New Covenant.

Heb 9:18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood.

Heb 9:19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, **and hyssop**, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

Heb 9:20 saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU."

Jesus said that the Law of Moses was speaking of Him.

John 5:39,36 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me...For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses and the prophets, that was one of the primary things He came to do. Scripture tells us that it was **all** fulfilled at His death.

Heb 9:15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

So Jesus said He came to fulfill the law and the prophets which He says were all about Him, and Scripture tells us that He finished what He started -- He accomplished His mission.

Objection 2: So if Jesus fulfilled the law, does that mean that we can now murder, steal, commit adultery, worship idols and all the other things that the Ten Commandments say not to do?

You may have noticed in this study that I have not said that all the other nine commandments are still in effect, but only the Sabbath, the fourth commandment, isn't. This is how most people explain why we don't need to observe the Sabbath in the New Covenant. They will say that the others are still in effect but one of them isn't because it's a ritual law. I think that is bad theology, though their heart is in the right place.

I have made it clear that Scripture teaches that none of the Ten Commandments are still in effect today. They have all been done away with. They were the very words of the Old Covenant kept in the Ark of the Covenant, and Scripture repeatedly refers to the tablets of stone as the embodiment of the Old Covenant.

As we have already seen in detail, the Ten Commandments were all replaced with the so-called law of Christ, what Jesus calls His commandment at the Last Supper's institution of the New Covenant, which is to love your neighbor. Scripture is explicit on this fact.

Rom 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Rom 13:9 For the commandments, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER," "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL," "YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS," "YOU SHALL NOT COVET," **and if there is any other commandment**, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

Rom 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Here the Ten Commandments are clearly in view. So is Scripture teaching us here that it is okay to commit adultery, murder, steal, bear false witness etc. as long as we love people? To think this is to fundamentally misunderstand the New Covenant.

As we have seen, the purpose that God had for the New Covenant was that He would put His Spirit in a person at the moment of salvation and that the Spirit would give the person a new desire to do good. The Spirit would cause a person to live morally: it was called the Fruit of the Spirit.

All the morality that was stressed in the Old Testament is repeated in the New Testament. All the things that people ask about in this objection, like adultery or murder, idolatry and indeed all moral commandments, are called deeds or lusts of the flesh. And they are mentioned in the various New Testament lists of sins. Here is one of those lists.

Gal 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: **adultery**, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

Gal 5:20 **idolatry**, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

Gal 5:21 envy, **murders**, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Gal 5:23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Gal 5:24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Gal 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

The New Testament writers were always dealing with this objection after they would explain the liberty of the Gospel, and that is why many times they had to stress lists like these. They were saying "No, guys, I'm not saying adultery is okay. Sins are obvious. Why are you even asking this? They are this, and this, and that." Never is an Old Testament ritual listed in one of these lists of so-called "evident" New Testament sins, but all of the moral laws are.

Murder and these other moral principles were not pointing to Christ like the Sabbath was; that makes no sense. They could not be fulfilled like the Sabbath or the Passover or the sacrificial law. For a detailed description of the difference between the moral and ritual laws, see the book *Sabbath in Christ*.

Paul was always dealing with this question. "Well if you say we have liberty, then why should we not sin?"

Rom 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Rom 6:2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Rom 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Rom 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Rom 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Sin no longer has the power over us that it once did. We have been given a new liberty.

Paul spends the last half of the next chapter (Romans 7) explaining that though we have been free from the power of sin, it does not mean that we won't sin ever again. John echoes this in 1 John:

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

If we have been saved, we have a safety net under us to catch us if we sin; there is no longer any condemnation for our sins.

Rom 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

We can be trusted with this liberty only because of the new heart that we have been given by the Spirit. The problem is that if someone is not truly saved, they do not really want to do good, and those are the people that see this as too good to be true, and sadly for them it is. It can't work for them; they don't have the one ingredient necessary to be trusted with this liberty -- the Holy Spirit.

We are told to examine ourselves to see if this Spirit is in us.

2Co 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

We can do that by looking for the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22,23. Are they evident in your life? 1John 24 says

...And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

So to answer this objection plainly, NO, murder and adultery and all other things that Scripture says are evident are not okay in the New Covenant, and all the moral principles, like stealing and idolatry, are reiterated in the New Testament as sins., But people that are truly saved will not need to be told by the law not to do these things, as their hearts will be changed, and they will want to not do them out of love. But if a child of God sins, there is now no condemnation for them. The difference is the Spirit.

Objection 3: It says in the Old Testament that the Sabbath should be kept forever or throughout your generations. It is also seems to be kept in the Millennium. What do you say about that?

Here is an example of verses like this in regard to the Sabbath:

Ex 31:16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath **throughout their generations** as a **perpetual covenant**.

Ex 31:17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel **forever**; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.

Before we get started explaining this we need to add a few things to the list of rituals that are described as being everlasting or eternal or forever.

The word for *everlasting*, *forever*, and *perpetual* are all using the Hebrew word "*Owlam*" and the word is used to describe the duration of many practices in the Old Testament.

Jewish Passover (Ex 12:14,24)

Day of Atonement (Lev 16:30-31)

Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:41-42)

Feast of Unleavened Bread: (Ex 12:17)

Tabernacle Candles (Lev 24:2-4)

Tabernacle Showbread (Lev 24:5-9)

Levitical Priesthood (Ex 29:7-9)

Animal Sacrifices (Lev 7:36-38; Deut 12:27-28; Ex 29:42)

Grain offering (Lev 6:15-18; 23:13-14)

Incense burning (Ex 30:8)

Tabernacle work (Numbers 18:22-23)

Priests washing (Ex 30:21)

Circumcision (Gen 17:10-14)

Unlike some people, I will not say that *forever* doesn't mean forever, or that is some allegorical term. I think that the word *forever* here probably means forever, and incidentally most of these things on this list are mentioned as occurring in the Millennium, but more on that in a minute.

What about keeping the feasts? They are clearly said to be forever. Here is an example:

Ex 12:17 And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, **throughout your generations**, as a statute **forever**.

The Levitical priesthood of Aaron was also said to be forever, but it is also said to have ended in the New Covenant;

Heb 7:11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

Heb 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

We could go down the list and show that animal sacrifices and the various feasts that were said to be forever are explicitly said not to be necessary in the New Covenant, but I think you get the point.

The argument that the Sabbath was said to be forever in the OT, and therefore we must keep it in the New Covenant is picking and choosing which “forevers” you want and disregarding the ones you don’t.

At this point in this presentation you can get a sense of how many verses in the Bible you would have to disregard to believe that keeping the Mosaic Law and its rituals was necessary in the New Covenant.

In other words, Scripture is clear that the Law of Moses and all its ordinances, like feasts, have been fulfilled in the New Covenant. So again, how are we to understand these “forevers” in regard to these rituals? Am I saying that this is a contradiction in Scripture?

I think that these “forevers” are referring in some sense to the Millennium where there seems to be a reinstatement of many of the Old Testament practices, yet they are still not spoken of in a salvific sense but in a memorial sense and for the purpose of worship.

For example in Ezekiel 42-46, which is clearly speaking of the Millennium shows that during that time all the principal offerings that were introduced in the Levitical system will be present, namely, the burnt offering, the oblation, the peace offering, the sin and trespass offerings, and the drink offering. The same chapters also show many of the feasts that will be celebrated.

The Sabbath and the new moons will also be celebrated by all flesh:

Isa 66:23 And it shall come to pass That from one **New Moon** to another, And from one **Sabbath** to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.

The Millennium is a time that is very interesting. Allow me to name a few of its interesting qualities. Ezekiel describes how the city of Jerusalem will be about nine times its current size in the Millennium, there will be a temple that is about the size of the current city of Jerusalem, this temple gives modern day Jews a lot of trouble because of odd things like no court of the gentiles or women, no veil, no ark of the covenant and many other things. There also seems to be a very interesting difference in the lay of the land, and animals will no longer eat other animals.

Isa 11:6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.

Isa 11:7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isa 11:8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.

People will have longer lifespans:

Isa 65:20 “No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

I mention all this to give you a sense that the Millennium is a different place: the earth is different; the laws of nature are different. It is not good doctrine to say that just because something is said to be done in the Millennium we should be doing it now.

You would not let your child play in a cobra's den today, I hope, nor would you let a lion into a sheep pen. In the same way, you would not say that just because animal sacrifices and new moon feasts seem to be kept in the Millennium that we should be doing it today.

The most important reason is because you would have to disregard all the Scriptures we have seen that say explicitly that in the New Covenant these sacrifices and other ordinances of the Mosaic covenant are not required.

Whatever the reason that God has decided to have these things done in this time, I do not really know. However most Bible scholars will say something like this in regard to Levitical practices in the Millennium:

"In the coming day the sacrifices will look back on the life and death of Christ in this world, whereas the sacrifices of the Levitical system looked forward to the coming and sacrificial work of Jesus."

Objection 4: In Matthew 24 Jesus says that we should pray that our flight not be on the Sabbath. Does this mean He expects us to be keeping the Sabbath when that day comes?

Let's start by quoting this passage in context:

Mat 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

Mat 24:16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Mat 24:17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

Mat 24:18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Mat 24:19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Mat 24:20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Mat 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

First we notice that this is a warning to flee from Judea when you see the abomination of desolation. This is referring to when the antichrist will declare himself to be higher than God in the holy place in Jerusalem.

We know that at this time a persecution will begin that we are told will be unlike anything before it. Jesus warns people who are in Judea to flee very fast, not even going down to get anything out of their house. This is because the command to kill people from the antichrist will have its epicenter in Judea, as that is where he will be doing this.

At the time just before this, we know that the people in Judea will have been offering the daily sacrifice in the temple, we know this because the abomination of desolation causes these daily sacrifices to cease (Dan 9:27). Therefore, the time just prior to this event will be one of great religious devotion in Israel, though it is likely that this religious devotion will not be acceptable to God but rather part of a false deception encouraged by the antichrist.

Even today in a very secular Israel, many trains and buses and cabs and planes do not operate on the Sabbath, making it very difficult to travel on the Sabbath, though at present you would not be stoned if caught breaking the Sabbath. But can you imagine what it would be like when the entire nation is back to making sacrifices and is in a time of fervent religious devotion.

Jesus starts out with a non-negotiable command to flee for people near the epicenter. This fleeing must happen either way, winter or not, pregnant or not, Sabbath or not.

Mat 24:16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

It says:

Mat 24:19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Mat 24:20 And pray that **your flight** may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Pregnancy, nursing babies, and winter, as well Sabbath keeping in Judea are all compared for one reason, that is that they would all slow down your fleeing. It does not say don't flee if you're pregnant, it just says woe to you, in other words because your flight will be slower than others.

So no, this does not mean Christians should keep the Sabbath at all; this is a command to flee the antichrist if you live in Judea during the abomination of desolation, and a lament for those who will have a harder time doing it.

Objection 5: James says “faith without works is dead.”

Jas 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Here again, context is key. What “works” is James talking about? He tells us just before this verse. He says:

Jas 2:8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

The Royal Law is the Law of Christ given at the Last Supper. The things James is telling people to do in this letter have to do with this law. For example, in the immediate context, we see he is talking about how this love of the brethren plays out, that is not just in words but in deeds:

Jas 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

Jas 2:15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,

Jas 2:16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

Jas 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Anyone that has studied James knows that his main burden is the Law of Christ: loving people and treating them well. For example, he says that “pure religion” is visiting the orphan and widow in their affliction. The works he is trying to get them to do are the works of the new law, the law of loving your brother as yourself and giving yourself for them.

People miss that James is basically quoting directly from the Last Supper when he says:

Jas 2:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Jas 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

He is referring here to the thing that Jesus said about this new law of loving your brother, that is that it would be the way that people would see your faith.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35 **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

James is saying that if the law of the New Covenant is to love your brother, what James calls the Royal Law, then the works of that law should be things like not showing partiality and taking care of the orphans and widows and such. He is saying that we shouldn't just talk about it, but we should do it.

In no way does James imply that doing any of this is what we need to do to BE saved; he is clearly saying, the same thing Jesus says: that if you are really saved, if you have been given the Spirit of God in your heart, it will begin to give you these new desires; it will be an evidence of your salvation, not the cause of it.

Chapter 5 – Righteousness in Christ

There are a few more important things that we need to make sure we understand about the New Covenant before I close. The most important is our righteousness in Christ.

It's good to think of righteousness and our rightness before God. When we stand before Him will we be right with Him or not.

Scripture teaches that none are righteous (Romans 3), we cannot be perfect, but that nothing less than perfection will do. This dilemma is the heart of the Gospel.

We come before God, if we have been saved, on the basis of Christ's perfection or righteousness.

Php 3:9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Jesus lived a perfect life. He is the only person in history to deserve to go to heaven. God's gift, if we are saved, is that He has agreed to let us give Jesus our sin to be punished on the cross and in exchange we can be seen by God with Jesus' righteousness.

2Co 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Commenting on this verse, one Bible teacher put it this way:

"That means that God treated Jesus as though he committed every sin that was or will ever be committed, by every person, who would ever believe when in fact he committed none of them. Hanging on the cross he was holy, harmless, and undefiled. Hanging on the cross he was a spotless lamb. He was never for a split second a sinner. He is holy God on the cross. But God is treating him, I'll put it more practically, as if he lived my life. God punished Jesus for my sin, turns right around and treats me as if I lived his life. When God looks at the cross, he sees you and when he looks at you, he sees Christ." - John MacArthur

This is what Scripture means when it says we are "in Him": we are in Christ, we are hidden in Christ.

Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is **hidden with Christ in God**.

This is what Jesus' great prayer for us was just before he was killed.

John 17:20-21 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

This is why it will be foolishness to appeal to your Sabbath-keeping or your good works when you stand before God. You cannot measure up. There is only one hope for you on Judgment Day: that is to be hidden in Christ. You have not measured up, but there was One that did, and you can enter into that covenant of peace with God through faith in Him:

The dangers of not understanding this and thinking that you are doing God a favor by keeping the Sabbath are very severe. Paul was worried for the Galatians who believed in Jesus, but wanted to kind of be *extra* saved by doing some OT rituals. Paul says this to them:

Gal 4:9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, **how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?**

Gal 4:10 **You observe days and months and seasons and years.**

Gal 4:11 **I am afraid for you**, lest I have labored for you in vain.

Why should he be worried for them? I mean isn't it just like having insurance. "I'll go ahead and keep some of these OT laws just in case God likes it." Scripture says that that is a different gospel, and that you don't understand the true Gospel, and that you are in great danger.

Gal 5:2-4 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

In fact, many times people are not actually saved until they repent from their dead works. They may even believe that Jesus was the Son of God and all this right doctrine, but yet have never had faith in Him; they are still having faith in themselves. Scripture tells you to repent of your dead works. It calls it part of the foundation of Christian doctrine:

Heb 6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works** and of faith toward God,

This is where many people out there listening to this are - the need to trust Christ for their righteousness before God and repent of their trying to come to God by their works, an impossible task, and a different gospel. In fact, it is not good news at all; in other words you need to be saved by faith in Christ.

Finally, I will touch on some practical matters and give some opinions. What should we do on Saturday if anything? I personally think that the Sabbath is a lot like eating kosher or being circumcised in that they are healthy life choices and are beneficial. But the minute they become something that you are doing to be extra saved is the minute that you are in danger of being put back under the law.

For example, I don't eat pork much or at least I rarely buy it. I sometimes eat it when we are at friends' houses or on similar occasions. I think circumcision is healthy. Studies have shown a marked decrease in things like cervical cancer where it is practiced. This is because of bacteria and other things, they postulate. Similarly the Sabbath is a good day for rest. Man is wired for rest, and it is healthy to do so if it is at all possible. But we must remember Scripture when it says things like:

1Co 6:12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything.

I should also note that keeping the Sabbath and other OT laws may in fact be something that God has put on your heart to minister to people in cults. I know a few occasions where God has put this on a person's heart and because they kept the Sabbath they were able to reach a person with the Gospel that they otherwise wouldn't have. But you must do this knowing that your Sabbath keeping is not pleasing God or adding points to your score card. That is a fundamental and dangerous misunderstanding of how one is made righteous.

Gal 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Chris White can be contacted for any reason at ChrisWhiteMinistries.com

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