

The Sabbath

Keith Evan Schubert
Cornerstone Bible Baptist Church
Redlands, CA

Chapter 1

Introduction

Few discussions breed more vehemence in the church today than discussions of the sabbath. If you support it you are a legalist, if you deny it you are a liberal. Such debates bring more heat than light, yet still the questions remain.

What is the sabbath? What day is it celebrated? How is it celebrated? Is it for the New Covenant?

More often than not, these questions are answered based off theological conventions. We will take our time answering them, so we may examine the Scriptures.

Before we begin I will set out my basic assumptions. First, Scripture is the final authority in this and all matters, not creeds, catechisms, confessions, or traditions. Second, the Bible is not to be used to proof-text¹, rather whole passages must be read and the Scriptures are to be allowed to say whatever God wills not what we want. Third, this is a secondary issue, and while important, it is not an issue to divide over².

All Scripture will be from the KJV³.

¹Some may misunderstand what I mean here. I mean that we are not to have a theory and seek to prove it by quoting a verse apart from its context.

²Some seem to think this means we need not discuss it, or seek God's will in it. I heartily disagree, secondary does not mean unimportant, just not essential.

³The KJV is an excellent word for word translation, which happens to be best version I have in electronic form. Many other fine versions exist and the reader is encouraged to consult them, such as the NASB, NRSV, NIV, NKJV, ESV. I strongly discourage paraphrases such as the LT, NLT, GN. Paraphrases are not reliable for study.

Chapter 2

Sabbath in the Old Testament

In Genesis chapter 1, God created the heavens and the Earth in six days and rested on the seventh. While the sabbath is not mentioned explicitly, this is often referred to in scripture as the basis of the sabbath. It is worth noting that while many claim an earlier commandment on the sabbath¹ (before the law, which we will discuss next), this contradicts Nehemiah 9:14. Below is a long quote but it is important to see the whole context.

⁹ And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea; ¹⁰ And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. ¹¹ And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. ¹² Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. ¹³ Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: ¹⁴ And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: ¹⁵ And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them. ¹⁶ But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, ¹⁷ And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. ¹⁸

¹Many commentators claim that the use of the wording to remember the sabbath, implies they already knew of it. This is not the case, the command is not to recall a past command but to remember in the sense of practicing continually. Hardly a proof of past knowledge, it is an enjoiner of future action.

Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; ¹⁹ Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. ²⁰ Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. ²¹ Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

Nehemiah 9:9-21

Nehemiah 9 is a teaching on the law and history of the Jews. In discussing the giving of the law Nehemiah says God made His holy sabbath known to the people with the law. This would make no sense if there was a sabbath decree the Jewish people were given. Some may protest that Exodus 16 has a sabbath decree on the collection of manna. In fact, Exodus 16:20-31 is the first reference to the seventh day as the holy Sabbath, and that no one was to go and work. There are only three ways I can think to read this:

1. Since the giving of manna is part of the lead-up to Sinai, which begins with God's command to pharaoh to let God's people go so that they may worship Him, God views it as part and parcel of the giving of the law and thus not an earlier command. This is further backed up by the fact that Nehemiah 9:15 speaks of the giving of manna after the giving of the Law, showing a general address of the time period was intended. Note also the golden calf is mentioned after, as are the pride and rebellions. In Nehemiah, there is a clear reference to the period of the Exodus being the revealing of the commandment, not necessarily the particular day the tablets of stone were brought down.
2. The sabbath was given in the beginning and was forgotten while the Israelites were in Egypt, thus to the Exodus generation it was revealed.
3. This is an earlier commandment to the Jews on the sabbath, and thus a contradiction in Scripture.

The second option seems to provide an out, but lacks any support. Since the word sabbath is not mentioned before Exodus 16, it is pure speculation that the command existed earlier. God prohibits murder to Noah, He commands Abraham and his descendants to be circumcised, sacrifices are mentioned starting with Cane and Abel, a priest bringing bread and wine with Melchizedek, but why no mention of a sabbath? Why do even the historical references in the Bible point to Sinai as the start of sabbath worship? While some may argue that ancient people used a seven day calendar, this is not general because the ancient Egyptian

calendar had 10 day weeks and it is arguably the oldest known. It might be argued that the seven days of creation are the start and certainly God rests from creating. The seventh day is not called a sabbath in the text, and numerous texts of scripture note God never ceases work complete, and does not rest (including a direct statement from Jesus on this, which we will deal with later). Should the Sabbath actually have been an ordinance from the beginning that is forgotten we must explain why God never says so in the creation text, never mentions it in any of the subsequent commands to his followers before Sinai, why all the other texts of Scripture point to Sinai as the start, and why no text says sabbath worship started at creation². Given that there is no evidence or requirement for number two in Scripture, it cannot be safely accepted.

In order for option three to be true there must be no reasonable way to read the text that is not contradictory and a reasonable reading is provided by the first or second option. Since the second option has no support and the first option is in sync with the natural reading of the text and the appearance of the word sabbath in Scripture, option one is the preferable reading. At this point we must accept the first reading, provide the lacking support of reading 2, or provide another alternative. As I cannot think of any other alternative³, I will go with the first reading. This leaves the point that the Sabbath was given at the time of the Exodus, and at least not generally practiced before at best and reasonably likely that it was not practiced before. The Sabbath is thus seen as particular to the Old Covenant, also known as the Mosaic Covenant or the Covenant at Sinai.

2.1 The Law

In Exodus chapter 20 and Deuteronomy chapter 5, the fourth commandment is to observe the sabbath. Let's look at what the text says.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

²The giving of the law cites the creation as a reason for a seven day cycle, but does not say the seven day cycle started then. If we believe the Bible is word for word accurate, then we must go with the words chosen by God, even if we don't like what it says or does not say. The Bible never say sabbath worship or observance started at the creation.

³If the reader can think of another way of understanding this, I am happy to consider it. My lack of alternative readings is hardly proof. Those wanting to support an earlier commandment still must address the problem of a supportable argument and explain why the plain reading of the passage, which fits nicely in both texts and the appearance of the word sabbath, is not the case. This is a tall order with no Biblical support from which to draw. This is no small point if we truly value Biblical authority.

Exodus 20:8-11

God here clearly prohibits work⁴ on the Sabbath by anyone: parents, children, servants/workers, visitors/guests, and animals. Note that not even strangers, who might not be Jewish, were excluded. God required His people to observe the sabbath by a complete rest of all labour of all things working on the behalf of His people. The reason stated is the creation and God's resting. Note that it is not possible to separate the practice and day from the commandment, if the command is for today, then you had better allow no work what-so-ever to be done in your house from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday⁵.

Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Here again the Lord clearly prohibits any work being done by anyone in your house. God further underscores the importance of not having anyone who works for you doing work, citing as a reason the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt. Notice that creation is not cited but the Exodus was. Why would this be if the commentary in Nehemiah 9 was not correct in its assertion that the Sabbath was given during the Exodus. In summary, both

⁴I have heard some try to switch from the common use of work to the physics definition of work, as an attempt to say God did not mean no work and thus electricity and such which require others to labor for you on the Sabbath is not a violation are spurious at best. God was not using modern physics terms in giving the law, He was using common speech. If such were the case then every law of God can be overturned by appealing to the right dictionary or specialized area of learning for the right escape clause. Let us be serious and diligent here, God means the labour of a living being at our behest. Turning on a light puts such a requirement on the electric company.

⁵The Jewish day was from evening through day, as is seen in Genesis 1. Some later Jews reckoned a day from one morning to the next as can be seen in several gospels, so at best you have Saturday morning till Sunday morning if you so want to argue. See for example Matthew 28:1. On another note, many say the day of observance and the observance are not linked, thus a change of day is possible. Such a comment has no basis in Scripture as even a cursory reading of Exodus 20:8-11 shows. Can we seriously imagine that God was just saying we need one day in seven to rest? Why was the man gathering sticks on the seventh day of the week in Numbers 15 put to death? He could have taken Tuesday off. God was not arguing for an arbitrary pick your day mentality. God was commanding a particular day. No Biblical warrant exists in the remotest for such a view. God was not commanding one day in seven. God commanded the seventh day.

prohibit any work by anyone, even animals, with a particular emphasis on servants. The Ten Commandments were covenant commandments attached to the Old Covenant, and God gave two reasons for the commandment- creation and the deliverance from Egypt. Leviticus 23:3 also states

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

Leviticus 23:3

No work, strangely means no work, not only a little if you must and it is not for financial gain. It means no work.

God proclaims that the sabbaths are a sign between Israel and God,

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus 31:12-18

It is important to see that at the giving of the law, and thus also the Old Covenant, God indicates the centrality of the sabbath to the Jewish people. The commandment is binding for all who are under the Old Covenant, because it is a sign of the covenant. Note also that the penalty for breaking the sabbath was death. In Numbers 15:30-36 a man is stoned for breaking this command.

But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath

broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him. And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Numbers 15:30-36

The passage speaks of sinning presumptuously and then speaks of a man gathering sticks⁶ on the sabbath, and that this deserved death. Don't miss it. Even a small labor on the sabbath was presumptuous and worthy of death. God is very serious about His commands. This becomes significant when the disciples collect grain on the sabbath to eat. Realize that the first man put to death was gathering wood, not selling wood. Personal use is not a defense. If the sabbath is for today you must follow it to the letter. If it is not, then why put burdens God does not?

Exodus 35:2-3 adds that not even a fire was to be kindled on the sabbath.

And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath commanded, that ye should do them. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

Exodus 35:1-3

Here again we see that no work is to be done on penalty of death. Even starting a fire to warm yourself was work and thus prohibited. It does not state or imply commercial activity, as many today try to claim. Certainly that would also be prohibited, because no one was

⁶The word can also be translated firewood, and suggests logically that the man was gathering wood to warm his family. In all likelihood he had not set up a good fire the previous day and wanted to warm his tent. God's requirement was not enough to inconvenience him, so he gathered his wood when he felt like it. This is the equivalent of our modern utilities because they too are to warm and cook for our families. Utilities also require work be done to supply the gas or electricity at the time of use. This cannot be escaped by saying pagans are already necessitating the work be done, you are not allowed to sin because they do. If it is wrong to work on the sabbath then it is wrong to use utilities, so don't go flushing that toilet on the sabbath.

allowed to do any labor. How many times must God say something before we believe Him? The sabbath is what we now call Saturday, and no work of any kind⁷ is to be done on it.

Easton claims this was peculiar to the Old Covenant⁸, though he supplies no proof as to why this is to be believed. This is because there is no text which does so in the Bible. Jesus certainly claims mastery of the sabbath, but He does not give new ordinances, He just speaks of right to do whatever He wants to on the day⁹. My point here is that God loving men like Easton, who I admire in all sincerity, will often see things through their assumptions rather than listen to the plain teaching of Scripture. All of us do at various points, but we must never allow that to excuse it, rather we must seek to align ourselves more fully with the truth of God's word.

2.2 Other Sabbaths

Other holy days, like the Day of Atonement, also were referred to as sabbaths. Consider the following.

And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priests office in his fathers stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for

⁷I must qualify this in one area, priests and temple servants (scribes reading the law for instance) were commanded to fulfill their duties to the Lord by serving, sacrificing, and teaching. Even they were to suspend the normal labors of life and devote themselves wholly to God, for them this just involved a few activities they normally did. As an interesting observation, how can 'moral law' be suspended? Can you imagine God granting idol worship on Tuesdays? How about allowing some group to take His name in vain? Clearly these are not possible, but priests are commanded to violate the sabbath. Moral law must comply with and reflect God's character, and as such it cannot be suspended. Since the sabbath is suspended at God's command, it is not possible for the sabbath to be moral law.

⁸Easton particularly refers to the Old Covenant as a dispensation, in keeping with covenant theology's view of one covenant of grace. This has no Scriptural support and many contrary passages such as the book of Hebrews, which is a discourse on the superiority of the new covenant to the old covenant and all their aspects. Sinai is clearly portrayed as a covenant that is finished and replaced, not updated with a newer dispensation of the same covenant. Try reading Hebrews 8, that speaks of the end of the old covenant with the phrase "the old dispensation of the same covenant of grace" replacing "old covenant", "first dispensation of the same covenant of grace" replacing "first covenant" and "the new dispensation of the same covenant of grace" replacing "new covenant". It just doesn't work.

⁹I will back this up in the chapter on Jesus and the sabbath.

the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Leviticus 16:29-34

Here the Day of Atonement is called a sabbath and the same proscription against work is placed on it. Furthermore it is called an everlasting statute (or for ever) repeatedly. When people try to claim everlasting status for the weekly sabbath, I often wonder why they ignore such a direct statement of everlasting status here. If the weekly is in effect, then so is this. I see no way around it if any Old Covenant law is still in effect. This like the rest of the Old Covenant law was law for those under the covenant, while the covenant was in effect. It is not binding today on believers because believers are not under the Old Covenant (see the chapter on Paul).

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Leviticus 23:23-32

The feast of trumpets and the Day of Atonement are sabbaths. Notice the strong language of destroying and that no manner of work was to be done. Again this is said to be everlasting. Why is there no argument that this should be followed? Some may protest that these are ‘ceremonial law’ and that it is done away with in the New Testament. The trouble with that argument is there is no division of the old covenant law into moral, ceremonial, and civil laws. Search your Bibles and you will find no mention or even allusion. The division is a product of man made conventions. I will speak more on this in Section 2.3.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein. These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day: Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD. Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

Leviticus 23:33-44

Here we see Booths adds two more sabbaths. Note that while the passage on Passover did not say it was a sabbath¹⁰ the New Testament says it was, as seen in the crucifixion. This final passage is long but worth the read.

And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy

¹⁰Though it said no work was to be done

hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat.

And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession. And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbours hand, ye shall not oppress one another: According to the number of years after the jubile thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am the LORD your God. Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety. And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store.

Leviticus 25:1-22

The first paragraph constitutes the first seven verses, which indicate every seventh year is to be a sabbath. No food was sown or gathered. God indicates He would provide them enough food to last (see second paragraph) even for the double sabbath which happened in the jubilee year so no work would have to be done. Here also the blessings and cursings of the covenant are connected. It is actually the failing to keep these year sabbaths that brought about the exile as foretold in the cursing for disobedience in Deuteronomy and which will be seen in the sections below. Thus God placed great importance on these sabbaths also, so much so that He would exile His people to let the land get the exact number of sabbaths He demanded.

The point of these passages is that all these other days were not “lesser” sabbaths as some try to imply. The text clearly puts every bit the emphasis on following the non-weekly sabbaths as it does on the weekly ones. Attempts to show one as greater or lesser is dependent not on the Bible but on theological systems. When a system draws lines that God indicates aren't there we should be very weary¹¹.

2.3 Aren't The Ten Commandments Different?

At this point I have had people tell me that the Ten Commandments are a higher law than the rest of the law. The Ten Commandments are the moral law it is said. On what basis? Certainly not God's word. The separation of the law into moral, ceremonial, and civil laws is nowhere spoken of in scripture. Does that surprise you? It did me when I started seriously looking at this.

Some will certainly say that “Trinity” does not appear in the Bible either. This is a poor comparison, because I said the teaching of any such separation does not appear, whereas I am sure we all agree that the teaching of the “Trinity” does appear in the Bible. Don't miss the force of my words. There is no teaching or support for the division of the law. The support of the division usually comes from a document such as the Westminster Confession's division.

Some may ask at this point if there is anything wrong with making the distinction. The answer is it depends. If you are just trying to explain the types of commands in the old covenant, then I see no problem. If on the other hand you are trying to elevate one passage of scripture over another (and that is exactly what is being done here), then it is very wrong.

Is something right or wrong when the Bible does not teach it? The next objection I hear is that just because it is not taught in scripture does not make it wrong. Anti-biotics are not mentioned in scripture, but they certainly are good. Similar arguments could be made for math and a variety of other things. Again the comparison is bad. Those areas of learning are not touched on in scripture and their study does not cause the rejection of a straightforward reading of scripture. That might offend some and I really thought over the words before I wrote them. I don't see how to say it any other way. It is no small change of the reading of scripture either to disregard most of the old covenant as less important because it is not the ten commandments, or to hold on to the ten commandments and place them over the new covenant.

A second reason it is not ok to teach the ten commandments as distinct and better than

¹¹Most will argue these passages are in the “ceremonial law” not the “moral law” to get around the difficulty. As indicated earlier, the problem here is that the distinction being drawn is never made in Scripture, and in fact if one were to just read the passages then it would not be possible to find the distinction between these laws. Again when a system draws lines that are completely without basis in Scripture you should tread very carefully and start examining your assumptions. Scripture is the final court of arbitration not creed, confession, or theological system. *Sola Scriptura*.

the rest of the old covenant is that the Bible not only doesn't teach it, the Bible teaches against it. The words "ten commandments" only appear three places in the old testament.

²⁸ And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. ²⁹ And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. ³⁰ And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. ³¹ And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. ³² And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. ³³ And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. ³⁴ But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. ³⁵ And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Exodus 34:28-35

Notice in this passage the "ten commandments" is not presented as higher than the rest of the old covenant, but rather symbolic/representative of the rest. Moses not only expounded them but all the words the Lord spoke to Moses on Sinai. Moses couldn't have carried them all down on stone tablets, so God gave him two tablets of commandments to represent His covenant with His people. God expected all His commandments to be followed as part of the old covenant, and the ten commandments were given as part of the old covenant thus they are authoritative only to those under the old covenant. Consider a few passages from the new testament

1. Ro 3:19 *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*
2. Ro 6:14-15 *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*
3. Galatians 3:10 *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

4. Galatians 3:23 *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*
5. Galatians 4:4-5 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*
6. Galatians 4:21-26 *Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*
7. Galatians 5:1-5 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*
8. Galatians 5:18 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*
9. Hebrews 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?*

I do not see how these verses can be read, and someone still think we are under the ten commandments unless that person does not care what God's word says if it does not line up with their system.

¹ *Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.* ² *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.* ³ *Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.* ⁴ *But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day.* ⁵ *Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.*

⁶ *Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.* ⁷ *For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?* ⁸ *And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?* ⁹ *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons;* ¹⁰ *Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.* ¹¹ *And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.* ¹² *And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.* ¹³ *And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.* ¹⁴ *And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.*

Deuteronomy 4:1-14

Notice that the first two verses speak of the statutes and judgements not only the ten commandments. Nothing was to be added or taken away from any of it. The concept of some of it as higher or lesser both adds a new principle and diminishes from the significance of most of the text. It is a straightforward violation of the text. Notice as you read further it continues to speak of the statutes and judgements as all the law (v.8). Also in v.13 Moses speaks of the covenant and uses the ten commandments as synonymous with the old covenant. Finally, Moses again speaks of the importance of teaching and doing the statutes and judgements, not just the ten commandments. This is consistent with Galatians 3:10 quoted earlier.

¹ *At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.* ² *And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark.* ³ *And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.* ⁴ *And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them*

unto me. ⁵ And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me. ⁶ And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priests office in his stead. ⁷ From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters. ⁸ At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. ⁹ Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him. ¹⁰ And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee. ¹¹ And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give unto them.

Deuteronomy 10:1-11

This final passage continues the connection of the ten commandments with with covenant, to be placed in the ark of the covenant. The Bible does not treat the ten commandments as better and more lasting then the rest of the law. The Bible teaches the ten commandments are representative of the rest. When Hebrews says the old covenant is over, replaced with the new, then strangely it means just that.

2.4 Isaiah

All of Isaiah 56 shows a high regard for keeping the Sabbath, even at the coming of the Messiah.

¹ Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. ² Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

³ Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. ⁴ For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; ⁵ Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. ⁶ Also the sons of the stranger, that

join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; ⁷ Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. ⁸ The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

⁹ All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. ¹⁰ His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. ¹¹ Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. ¹² Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

Isaiah 56

Verse one begins by setting the stage. God's salvation is near to come (this is a messianic passage as the previous several chapters reveal) and He wants His people to continue judgement and justice. Verse 2 picks up the theme and says a blessing is for the one who does and lays hold of this crucial thing. What is it? The sabbath. God intends His people to diligently cling to the covenant He gave them and to the sign of it: the sabbath. Isaiah speaks of this blessed one keeping his hand from doing evil. This is not just evil as we think of it, stealing or hurting, it is even more broad. We have seen that doing any work on the sabbath is evil, since the context of the sentence is keeping the sabbath Isaiah isn't saying to make a special effort not to kill or steal on the sabbath, he is saying don't violate the sabbath by working and thus do evil.

Verse 3 goes on to speak of how those in the days before the coming of the Messiah were to be. Those diligently following God, even if they were orphaned strangers or eunuchs were not to think of themselves as cut off because of God's presence with them. What was first thing that marked such a close relation with God? Verse 4 says it is following the sabbath. Sabbath following is connected with loving the things of God and holding onto the Old Covenant. God indicates in verse 5 that such a one was to be part of the eternal salvation that marks the New Covenant. Those marked for the New Covenant were to be diligent in the works of the Old Covenant as they awaited their salvation. In verse 6, God again connects keeping the sabbath with being joined to God, loving His name, serving God, being God's servant, and taking hold of the Old Covenant. Verse 7 reiterates that the elect in Old Covenant times were the ones who would do such, because it says that those who did it will be brought to God's mountain. God then mentions that His house is to be a house of prayer, which is quoted by Jesus when He cleans the temple. Verse 8 indicates that the

followers will be the outcasts of Israel and others (outsiders/gentiles). This is exactly what we see in the New Testament.

Verses 9-11 then speak of the attitude and blindness of the leaders of the people in the Messiah's time. They cannot watch, they do not teach right, they seek their will and gain, they become drunk to forget the coming of Christ. We saw in verses 3-8 had heavy emphasis on the sabbath, and among the disobedient the sabbath is not mentioned. The silence speaks loudly for the disobedient ones lack of keeping the sabbath. The disobedient even say that one day is like the next, and they can will get more pleasure each day. No day was special, not even the sabbath. The distinctive between obedient and disobedient is love of the sabbath even at the coming of the Messiah.

While such a high regard is placed on the sabbath leading to the Messiah, no mention is given after. Following the sabbath is still connected heavily with the Old Covenant they were under. Nothing is said of the presence or absence of the sabbath in the New Covenant. In just over a chapter the sabbath appears again with promise of blessing for those who delight in it and do not do their own way.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Isaiah 58:13-14

This passage is hard for many modern readers to understand so allow me to paraphrase it. God is saying that if the Israelites turn away from doing what they want on the sabbath, which is God's holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, holy of God, and honorable. Furthermore, if they honor God, not doing their will, seeking their pleasure, or speaking their own words, then they would find their pleasure in God and God would give them control of the land¹². Notice again how crucial the sabbath is to the Old Covenant worship. It is the rest of God, and is seen as putting your full faith and confidence in Him. God rewards such complete faith with His everlasting presence¹³ and the covenant blessing of military success and the blessings of the promise land. Again while this is a wonderful promise to the Jews it does not say one way or the other what is to be done about the sabbath in the New Testament. Isaiah has one more passage that speaks of the sabbath.

¹²The term ride on the high places indicates riding a chariot to victory on the hills - indicative of Israel a land of hills. Feeding with the heritage of Jacob refers again to possessing the land which was promised to Jacob and thus getting the benefits of the land.

¹³Since He gave the faith per Ephesians 2

¹⁵ For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. ¹⁶ For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. ¹⁷ They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swines flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. ¹⁸ For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. ¹⁹ And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. ²⁰ And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. ²¹ And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD. ²² For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. ²³ And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. ²⁴ And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Isaiah 66:15-24

This is the culmination of Isaiah prophesy. The LORD coming with fire and rebuke to punish the sons of man for their evil (v. 15-17). God reveals His glory to the gathered nations and disperses His sign among the distant lands to declare His glory to the gentiles (v. 18-19). Then God draws His people from all the nations, that their lives be a continual offering instead of the old covenant sacrifices (v. 20). The priests are no longer just one tribe, but all of them are to be (v. 21). Those of the new covenant are as permanent as the new heavens and earth (v. 22). Then verse 23 happens, worship in the new covenant. It mentions new moons and sabbaths. Note that it says “**from one new moon to another**”, not on one new moon then another. It also says, “**from one sabbath to another**”, not on one sabbath then another. The image is that the new covenant will have continual worship, that is God says worship will happen on all the days. God takes the regular worship calendar and is telling the Jews that the ultimate worship is different, it is on all the interval not just the ends. Every commentator I saw agreed this was the clear intent of the passage. A few tried to argue a progressive ending (new moons go first then sabbaths in the new creation), but this is not supportable from the text. God is changing worship. No longer will the old

covenant feasts and celebrations be a disgust to God as he mentions in Isaiah 1. After the Messiah, every day is God's day. Every day is to worship the LORD. Every action is to be for His glory. We no longer have our own work, all work is God's work. It ends with the eternal punishment of those who disobey God (v. 24).

The sabbath was emphasized by Isaiah in chapters 56 and 58, and now Isaiah says that all days are to God. Not one in seven, seven in seven. Isaiah is the same prophet. The message has not changed, and yet the sabbath went from the most important to just another day. Why? The covenant changed.

2.5 Jeremiah and Nehemiah

Jeremiah has one major section that deals with the sabbath in chapter 17.

¹⁹ Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; ²⁰ And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: ²¹ Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; ²² Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. ²³ But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. ²⁴ And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; ²⁵ Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. ²⁶ And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD. ²⁷ But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

Jeremiah 17:19-27

In this passage God gives a message to Jeremiah, to take to every gate of the city and proclaim to every person. The message was simple: don't work on the sabbath and don't

carry a burden (either through the gate or out of your house). In other words God says that even carrying a heavy load was work on the sabbath. A burden was anything that is not light to carry. Carrying wares or even household goods were burdens. Carrying furniture such as your mat or bed would also certainly be a burden¹⁴. Again it is vital to note the emphasis: no work may be done on the sabbath, and carrying something is work. God took this very serious. Notice that obedience came with the rewards of the Old Covenant (safety/military victory, control of land, and joys of the temple) and disobedience came with the punishments of the Old Covenant (defeat and destruction).

Nehemiah further underscores this by emphasizing that no purchasing can go on the sabbath or any other holy day in Nehemiah 10:31.

And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

Nehemiah 10:31

Nehemiah goes on to address a further problem he found in chapter 13.

¹⁵ *In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.* ¹⁶ *There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.* ¹⁷ *Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?* ¹⁸ *Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.* ¹⁹ *And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.* ²⁰ *So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.* ²¹ *Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.* ²² *And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep*

¹⁴This is crucial later when we speak of Jesus' healing, for Jesus healed a man then told him to carry his mat, which is a load or burden. Jesus is God so as Lord of the sabbath He could order the man to do it. Some try to deny that there was a rule against it, but here we see a clear order of God that carrying a burden is work.

the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

Nehemiah 13:15-22

The Israelites were doing evil on the sabbath. What was it? Preparing wine, bringing in grain, loading animals, bringing in foodstuffs, selling food, fish, and all kinds of goods. Nehemiah rightly calls it evil and reminds the people that their current plight is because they did such profaning of the sabbath in the past. Nehemiah had the gates locked and guarded. First offenses received warnings, second offenses were met with “laying hands”, i.e. beatings. He reminded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves ceremonially and then guard the gate as this was God’s command to them. Note they could do this work because God ordered it. Again this is a critical point. People could not do what they wanted, but God always could overrule any command, even no work on the sabbath.

2.5.1 New Moons

Some have contended that the new moon was not part of the old covenant because it does not appear in the commandments of Moses. This is a spurious argument at best, but one I will deal with here.

Frist, the new moon is mentioned in the Pentateuch. The Jewish people had a lunar calendar, so each new month started with the new moon. In Numbers 10 it says

Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

Numbers 10:10

Note, it mentions that at the beginning of the month (new moon) they were to blow the horn over the offerings and sacrifices that were to be offered, and that they were memorials to the people of their relationship with God. The new moons were to be celebrated. Furthermore, it says in Numbers 28,

⁹ *And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof:*
¹⁰ *This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.* ¹¹ *And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot;* ¹² *And three tenth deals of flour for a meat offering,*

mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; ¹³ And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meat offering unto one lamb; for a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD. ¹⁴ And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year.

Numbers 28:9-14

Note again the start of the month (new moon) was to have a burnt offering (2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 sheep, flour with oil, wine). Clearly the Lord intended them to celebrate the new moon. How did the prophet's understand this.

Notice the connection of new moon and sabbath in these verses.

- 2Kings 4:23 *And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.*
- 1Chronicles 23:31 *And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD:*
- 2Chronicles 2:4 *Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.*
- 2Chronicles 8:13 *Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.*
- 2Chronicles 31:3 *He appointed also the kings portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD.*
- Nehemiah 10:33 *For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.*

- Isaiah 1:13 *Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.*
- Isaiah 66:23 *And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.*
- Ezekiel 45:17 *And it shall be the princes part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.*
- Ezekiel 46:1 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.*
- Ezekiel 46:3 *Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.*
- Hosea 2:11 *I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.*
- Amos 8:5 *Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?*

Both new moons and sabbaths were connected with each other and the worship of God from the early to late parts of the old testament period. Several passages even indicate that the law of the Lord or the law of Moses commanded it. It is not honest to say that the new moons and sabbaths were not connected as worship time unto God in the old covenant. As a final point, observe that Amos indicates that no selling was permitted on the new moon, just like the sabbath.

2.6 Conclusion

The sabbath was a holy day unto God. Most frequently the sabbath referred to our modern day of Saturday, but special holy days, and even every seventh year was also a sabbath. God always required the people not to do what they wanted on the sabbath, the sabbath was for doing what God wanted. No work could be done by you or anyone acting your behalf. Work entailed everything from lighting fires, picking things up, preparing meals, carrying anything that isn't light, to commercial activity. God could command certain people to

do specific tasks on the sabbath such as priests fulfilling their duties or Levites securing the gates. Breaking the sabbath was punishable by death, and God exiled the Israelites and destroyed both kingdoms for failing to follow the sabbath rules. The sabbath was intimately connected to the Old Covenant, including bringing the blessings and cursings of the covenant for obedience or disobedience. No distinction in wording or phrasology can be used to distinguish the different sabbaths in importance. Finally, the new moon was an old testament commanded feast, often placed in connection with the sabbath.

2.6.1 What is the Sabbath?

Sabbath, from the Hebrew, literally means to rest from labour. We most often use the word to refer to the seventh day of the week, which is Saturday in our naming system (for instance in the ten commandments).

Several old testament feasts are referred to as sabbaths, for instance in Leviticus 16:29-34. Note also that every seventh year is also a sabbath according to Leviticus 25:1-7. Even the New Testament refers to Passover as a sabbath (see the crucifixion of the Lord).

The Bible clearly refers to the sabbath as any holy celebration appointed by God on which no work is to be done. Most people are concerned with a tighter definition, namely the use of sabbath in the fourth commandment as the seventh day of the week. We will get to this, but note that God does not so restrict the term. If God sees fit to call other feasts and certain years to be a sabbath, we dare not lessen His word. Be careful not to let human categories and distinctions become enshrined. As protestants we believe in *Sola Scriptura* - Scripture Alone is our rule of all.

2.6.2 What Day is it Celebrated? Part I

The weekly sabbath is clearly celebrated on Saturday in the Old Testament. The special sabbaths were celebrated on the dates given, regardless of the day of the week, and the yearly sabbaths were all year long. This is incredible to think what it would have been like if they actually had worshiped God and trusted in Him and actually done this.

2.6.3 How is it Celebrated?

The sabbath rest is celebrated by doing no work. That is what the word means. The ten commandments, the subsequent explanations, and later prophetic writings are clear that no work of any kind by anyone or thing in your house is to be done. To celebrate the sabbath as commanded in the Old Testament would require no heating or air conditioning to be run (including your refrigerator), no loads carried, no excessive travel, no cooking, etc. Thus the celebration of the sabbath constitutes the cessation of all work.

Chapter 3

Jesus and the Sabbath

The sabbath is mentioned many times in the Gospels. In the following sections we deal with them situation by situation. We will begin by looking at the two sabbath incidents that are mentioned in three gospels: the grainfield and the healing of a man with a withered hand. We will cover two other healings with the healing of the man with the withered hand as they are similar in many respects. We will then cover two healings which involved work: the healing and commandment to carry a mat and the making of mud to heal the blind. The last two topics we will cover center on the sabbath as a date marker. Jesus taught on the sabbath and the time Jesus was in the tomb.

3.1 Fields of Grain and Healing

In three of the Gospels we can see the story of Jesus's disciples eating as they travel on the sabbath. As a side note, corn is not a good modern translation as corn was not raised during that time in palestine, being that it was discovered in America over a sixteen hundred years later. The translators were using the English traditional use of corn, which is wheat or barley. This is a case where the word has changed drastically since it was translated. The word indicates some grain, which fits the rubbing it in their hands. Another interesting note is that it is the second week of the harvest, Passover/Firstfruits is the start and this is two weeks into harvest.

First observe that, the pharisees are walking with Jesus and His disciples. This is interesting because the pharisees would only walk a short distance on the sabbath so as not to do work. In all likelihood Jesus had stayed at a houses and the pharisees were walking to the synagog with Jesus. It is unlikely that the disciples were starving, though it is possible they had not had breakfast.

Now some have said this is not against the law¹ as the law does not say you cannot gather food for your own use on the sabbath. Usually the citation is to Deuteronomy, which

¹Even John MacArthur goes with this.

Matthew

¹ At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. ² But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. ³ But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; ⁴ How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? ⁶ But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. ⁷ But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Matthew 12:1-8

Luke

¹ And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. ² And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? ³ And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him; ⁴ How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? ⁵ And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Luke 6:1-5

Mark

²³ And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. ²⁴ And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? ²⁵ And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? ²⁶ How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? ²⁷ And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: ²⁸ Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Mark 2:23-28

speaks not of the sabbath, but of gleaning the edges of the field. That is proof the disciples were not stealing, but the question was not did they steal. This is like a child's defense of changing the subject when caught. Sometimes a reference to Exodus 34 is given, where harvesting is forbidden. According to this understanding you can do anything that is not for profit or commercial benefit. This amazes me, as it is a very revisionist statement. The Israelites could not gather manna on the sabbath, which is gathering food for personal and not commercial benefit. On the year long sabbath you were not allowed to gather the food that grew, you had to store up a year's worth of food. God said he would bless them so they could store that up and not let it get damaged. He even stated they could not gather what grew on the two years of the jubilee, they should eat stored food. Why would He do that if it were not against His rules? For that matter why say not to do it if it is not to be obeyed? Beyond this, you were not to light fires in your house on the sabbath, which cannot be described as commercial. As a final note, why didn't Jesus just say that there is no prohibition in the law against what they do? Jesus responds with examples of how the law was broken but God allowed it, then says He is in charge of the sabbath. Jesus is saying that He can permit whatever He wants.

Jesus cites three passages in defense of breaking the sabbath and not being guilty. Notice carefully, from our reading of the old testament it is a clear violation of the sabbath, Jesus just uses three citations to indicate that they were not guilty of sin. Jesus states directly in verse 7 that a correct understanding of the bigger issues shows that the disciples were not guilty. Think about this before we look at the arguments Jesus uses. Jesus is saying that the 10 commandments are not the highest law. God is not constrained by law, God is the basis of the law. If the sabbath is inviolable moral law, how can Jesus defend breaking it, let alone declare them guiltless in the matter? He couldn't, but he does declare them guiltless, so the sabbath cannot be inviolable moral law. The passages are

1. David eating the shewbread (I Samuel 21:1-7)
2. Priests profaning the sabbath by serving (Numbers 28:9-10, Exodus 35:3)
3. mercy rather than sacrifice (Hosea 6:6)

3.1.1 David

Jesus leads off with a well known story of David from I Samuel.

¹ Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? ² And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. ³ Now therefore what is under thine hand?

give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. ⁴ And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. ⁵ And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. ⁶ So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. ⁷ Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

I Samuel 21:1-7

David is escaping Saul and didn't have time to pack. He came to the tabernacle to get food, since he was hungry. David arrived on the Sabbath, we know this because he arrives when the shewbread is being changed as stipulated in Leviticus 24:8.

⁵ And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. ⁶ And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. ⁷ And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD. ⁸ Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. ⁹ And it shall be Aarons and his sons; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.

Leviticus 24:5-9

God said the shewbread was to be considered most holy, and could only be eaten by the priests in the tabernacle grounds. David and his men take it to eat it on their journey. This is a clear violation of the law. Jesus chose a story of David violating the law on the sabbath, in the tabernacle and not being condemned for it.

How is it that David is not condemned for multiple clear violations of the law? God permitted it. God does not violate His morality, so the commands had to be not moral in character, rather the morality of obeying it was to obey God. The commandments that David violated were commandments to respect God, which David certainly did. God permitted David to violate them so David would be taken care of. God can do that, He is God. Note the Sabbath is one of the things violated.

3.1.2 Priests

Jesus then explains that priests violate the sabbath in what they are commanded to do.

⁹ And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof:
¹⁰ This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Numbers 28:9-10

Note that this requires the priests to light fires. Recall the prohibition against lighting fires².

Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

Exodus 35:3

Jesus says if it was ok to profane the sabbath to worship God in the temple, how much more is it ok to violate the Law when following Christ Himself. If the sabbath were moral law, it would never be ok to violate it. Either Jesus is the sinless lamb of God or the sabbath is inviolable moral law, you cannot have both. Jesus clearly states the sabbath is not inviolable moral law.

3.1.3 Mercy not Sacrifice

Jesus final point is that God cares about His people and more values mercy than sacrifice. Jesus is citing Hosea.

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

Hosea 6:6

Note that obedience to the sabbath is categorized by Jesus with sacrifice. Jesus is indicating He is permitting His disciples to eat, even though this violates the sabbath ordinance³.

²If someone wants to complain the prohibition is against lighting fires in your residence only, it is worth noting the priests resided where they had to light the fires. Further Jesus is clearly stating that the priest is violating the sabbath, so if you think He is wrong you can take it up with Him.

³It might be argued at this point that Jesus is just changing the observance of the sabbath to add some work into the permissible actions. The text does not say that, but even if that is granted it still requires that the sabbath rest be violated and thus it cannot be moral law. How can you have a working rest? For Jesus to permit work in a required rest of necessity requires Jesus to be able to cancel the rest.

Jesus is stating that God always had such a view in mind. The sabbath was not inviolable to God. God could do what He wanted to teach His people to follow and know Him. God cares about His sheep more than following rituals. Interestingly if you wanted to try to group commandments into moral, ceremonial, and civil to understand them better, you would have to put the fourth commandment into ceremonial.

3.1.4 Implications

Jesus is showing that God has always had the right to change how He is worshiped. We are morally required to worship as God requires at the moment. God could require me to wear a suit to worship Him one time and require a Hawaiian shirt and flip-flops the next time, should He so desire. There is not one absolute prescribed worship format for all times. Jesus notes this in three different passages and indicates that it justifies the actions of His disciples. This is similar to the instance of fasting.

¹⁸ And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? ¹⁹ And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰ But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. ²¹ No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. ²² And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

Mark 2:18-22

Jesus's point is that the disciples don't fast because He is there. Jesus then goes a step further and says you don't patch or piecemeal old and new things. If Jesus is arguing that this is just an adjustment of the old covenant, or a new administration of the old covenant He would not have said this. Jesus is saying that the old covenant rules do not fit with the new covenant. There will certainly be some similarities (fasting happens in both) just like a new garment is similar to an old one because they are both clothes, but they are different and cannot simply be pieced together. By the same token you cannot just sew the sabbath into the new covenant. If God wanted the sabbath in the new covenant He would have required it.

3.2 Sabbath Healings

Now let's read the next passages, which deal with the healing of the man with the withered hand.

⁹ And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: ¹⁰ And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. ¹¹ And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? ¹² How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. ¹³ Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

Matthew 12:9-13

⁶ And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. ⁷ And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. ⁸ But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. ⁹ Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? ¹⁰ And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. ¹¹ And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Luke 6:6-11

¹ And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. ² And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. ³ And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. ⁴ And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. ⁵ And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. ⁶ And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. ⁷ But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, ⁸ And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

Mark 3:1-8

Putting the three accounts together we see Jesus is teaching on the sabbath in the synagogue. A man has a withered hand, probably from birth, and the local Pharisees are looking for an opportunity to accuse Jesus. They ask the leading question if it is ok to heal.

They felt they could catch Jesus with doing unnecessary healing on the sabbath. No one argues that you can heal to save a life, but this could easily wait and so was unnecessary. They wanted to get Jesus saying you could do work on the sabbath in the synagogue so they could get rid of Him. It is more clever than we give them credit for. Jesus turns it around into the real issue of if we could do good or evil. This is very similar to the mercy versus sacrifice argument above. Even the Pharisees saw that their legalism did not fit with the revealed character of God but they could not admit it or change. They sat there silent, knowing Jesus was right that God preferred mercy to sabbath observance. They saw it but wouldn't obey God, even when the miracle confirmed it.

Jesus was angry at them for their hardness of heart, and they hated Him for showing they put the wrong emphasis in worship. How could they have it wrong though? God clearly stated no work was to be done. They rightly noted the centrality and importance of the sabbath in the old testament. Jesus did work and it pleased God. What they and sometimes we miss is that Jesus is God and He was bringing a new covenant. He has that right since the sabbath is law of the old covenant.

3.2.1 Woman Healed

Let's look at another sabbath healing.

¹⁰ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. ¹¹ And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. ¹² And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. ¹³ And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. ¹⁴ And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. ¹⁵ The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? ¹⁷ And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Luke 13:10-17

Here we have a case where Jesus initiates a healing in the synagogue, and the leader of the synagogue becomes angry because it was not a necessary healing. The leader of the synagogue wanted to follow the law as commanded, and Jesus confronted him with his

hypocrisy. What hypocrisy? Putting sacrifice over mercy with others when rightly putting mercy first in his life. The leader of the synagogue was ashamed, which means he understood he was wrong. What follows from a change to following God's requirement of mercy above sacrifice, which included sabbath observation? There was much joy in the glorious outpouring of the Lord! Does that describe your worship? Does rejoicing describe how you look forward to the gathering of the saints? If not you are missing out on the joy of the Lord. Note it is not freedom from worship, rather it is freedom in worship.

3.2.2 Man with Dropsy

Let us consider one more healing in this section. Luke describes the healing of a man with dropsy⁴.

¹ And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. ² And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. ³ And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? ⁴ And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; ⁵ And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? ⁶ And they could not answer him again to these things.

Luke 14:1-6

Here again Jesus heals and confronts the Pharisees with their lack of mercy and love in following God's laws. Jesus points out that they would have no problems helping one of their animals. They could not answer. Unlike the synagogue leader, who realized and changed, they simply stayed silent and followed their way not God's. Let us never put our desires over God's requirements. Sadly many today are more like the Pharisees than they would like to admit. I once was among them, observing sabbath infractions to keep my brothers and sisters from violating God's rest. It wasn't restful. It was work and I wasn't helping my brothers and sisters. We are to spur each other on to love and good works (per Hebrews 10), not nit-pick.

I know many who think they need to observe the sabbath who would agree with what I just said, and would then say Jesus was returning a right observance of the sabbath. It is certainly true God allowed certain work (Jesus shows that priestly duties and healing are permitted) on the sabbath. The point of these healings is not that Jesus was canceling the sabbath but rather that He could if He wanted to. God can grant exceptions (as those we just noted) to the sabbath because the sabbath is a form of old testament worship and the

⁴Dropsy is tissue swelling from fluid retention. It could be due to many causes such as dietary problems, exercise, hormones, or even congestive heart failure.

sign of the old covenant. The sabbath is not an inviolable moral law, for if it was there would be no exceptions and no modifications. The defense of modern sabbath observance is based on Christians being under the ten commandments because they are inviolable moral law. That the sabbath cannot be inviolable moral law, as evidenced from these passages breaks that argument.

3.3 Carrying a Mat

The healing of the man at the Bethesda pool is the start of the major southern rejection of Jesus. Let's look at the text.

¹ After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ² Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. ³ In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. ⁵ And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? ⁷ The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. ⁸ Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. ⁹ And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. ¹⁰ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. ¹¹ He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. ¹² Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? ¹³ And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. ¹⁴ Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. ¹⁵ The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. ¹⁶ And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. ¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Jesus comes to a feast, interestingly it is the only un-identified feast in the book of John. In any case, He enters Jerusalem and there was a huge mass of people hoping to be healed by an angel stirring the waters. The people waited for an angel to heal them when God was in their midst. It is kind of funny that they waited for the lesser when the greater was there. Jesus went up to a tough case everyone would recognize as not healable by man. A man who was known by all to have been lame for 38 years.

Jesus asked him if he wanted to be healed. The guy must have thought Jesus crazy. The man was in line for the Bethesda miracle pool and Jesus wanted to know if he desired healing. The man let Jesus know that he had been waiting but without help he wasn't fast enough. The man missed the point. He was waiting for an intern when the Great Physician was right there. Jesus told him to rise, take his bed, and go. The man was healed and carried a load, his bed. As he went away he was no doubt overjoyed. He was made whole. All the years of waiting. Then some of the Jews saw him and asked why he was carrying a load on the sabbath. You can imagine how he felt.

"I was just healed by God and now I am going to die for breaking the sabbath?"

He thinks quickly and points out the one who healed him told him to, but Jesus was lost in the crowd. It is like a cliff hanger, but the next scene has Jesus talking to him at the temple. How did he get to the temple. My suspicion was he was taken there for interrogation. I think the ones who asked knew who had healed the man but need a witness to convict Jesus. The man couldn't id Jesus but if he saw Jesus that might change, so they kept him in the temple area. I could be wrong, but it fits nicely with the surrounding facts. What happened in the part that God decided not to tell is interesting but not needed for our discussion. No matter what view you take, the important part is Jesus meets him in the temple and warns him not to sin⁵. After Jesus's warning the man runs to the leaders of the Jews and charges Jesus, starting the persecution because of a sabbath violation. Jesus had instructed a man to carry a load on the sabbath. This is clearly against the law. Nehemiah set guards with orders to beat first time offenders and kill second time offenders. God rewarded Nehemiah. How could Jesus go against the "moral law"?

Jesus explains in verse 17. This is the most damaging verse I know to an understanding of the sabbath as an absolute moral law. Jesus points out that God the Father and Jesus both work every day. God had taken a rest from creating, not from all work. If God did nothing on that first Saturday the universe would have unraveled instantly. God has to sustain all things by His mighty hand. God works all the time. Jesus says it directly. God can't sin. God can't lie. God does nothing immoral. God works on the sabbath. The implication is obvious and unavoidable; keeping the sabbath is not moral law independent of God's commandment to do so.

⁵While an odd way of greeting people in one sense, Jesus often warned those he helped. What sin did he commit? We will see in the next healing that sins and injuries are not one-to-one linked. So why did Jesus say this? It could be Jesus warning the man generically of sin, or it could be Jesus was warning the man not to continue through in charging Jesus who healed him, before the leaders of the people. Notice what the man does next. I think the latter fits best.

It is interesting to note even the leaders of the Jews understood the nature of God was bigger than the sabbath. When they had an opposition to Jesus on sabbath keeping they were mad, but when Jesus indicated He was equal with God really wanted to get Him. They understood what mattered more, even though they went the wrong way. Sadly, many Christians think the sabbath cannot be broken by God. The sabbath was eternal in that it could not be removed from the old covenant, but that doesn't mean it can outlast the old covenant. The sabbath was a great gift of God but the greater has come. Don't sit by the pool waiting for one day of the week, when Jesus, the rest of His people, is here.

Jesus had to leave, as it was not His time. He returns to Jerusalem two chapters later.

¹⁹ Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? ²⁰ The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? ²¹ Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. ²² Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. ²³ If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? ²⁴ Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

John 7:19-24

Jesus finds opposition on His return. Jesus confronts them and points out their own inconsistency. Moses reiterated the command to apply the Abrahamic sign of circumcision. Jesus notes that this work of removing part of a man takes precedence over the sabbath ban on work, why are they upset at the work Jesus does? Jesus is not saying He only healed. Jesus knows he commanded the man to carry the mat. Jesus point is that the sabbath is not the highest law. The Abrahamic sign of circumcision takes precedence over the old covenant (Mosaic) sign of the sabbath. Their own worship commanded it. Why did they have problems with Jesus? The healing shows that God approved, as you cannot heal apart from God. If Jesus heals and commands to carry a mat is bad⁶, then cutting a foreskin, which is work and does not make whole, must be worse. They knew circumcision had precedence, and was thus not bad. The implication is simple- Jesus could command for a load to be carried on the sabbath and not anger God. How? the sabbath is not moral law, as it can be broken with God's blessing and was lesser than circumcision⁷.

⁶Some might complain that Jesus only mentions the healing in this chapter. This is a short-sighted charge as the healing and command are connected in chapter 5 so tightly that referring to one implies the other. Even more though, say for the sake of discussion I grant the point, it still does not change the fact that Jesus points out another way the sabbath can be violated with God's blessing- circumcision. The removal of the carrying the mat does not help the sabbatarian case and it does violence to the text of chapter 5, which is referred to here in chapter 7.

⁷Note also that circumcision, which is greater than the sabbath according to the Bible is done away with in the new testament and none complain.

3.4 Making Mud

At the end of John 8, Jesus leaves the temple before they stone Him. In John 9:1-12 we read that as He is walking away His disciples see a man born blind. The disciples want to know was it a sin of the man or his parents that caused him to be born blind. The Jews, like many today, thought problems were the direct result of a particular sin. Jesus told them this was not the case. The man was born blind so the greatness of God could be shown when he was healed. Jesus commented that He was the light, then spat and mad a little bit of clay⁸. Jesus put the clay on the mans eyes and told him to go to Siloam and wash the clay off. When the man washed the clay off, he could see. Those who knew the man born blind were amazed and took him to the pharisees. Now starts our discussion proper.

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. ¹⁴ And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. ¹⁶ Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

John 9:13-16

The Parisees investigate how to get Jesus, and up comes the sabbath again. Not only did he heal, but he made and formed clay on the sabbath. A group of Pharisees starting running with this idea, as in form it seemed plausible even if the quantity of mud Jesus made was so small as to be ridiculous. Even others of the Pharisees saw a problem must exist, because how else could Jesus heal as He did. They reasoned the quantity was small and therefore not a violation. How small does a sin have to be before it doesn't count? That was the question. Every commentator comes in with a delineator of the minimum size in some sense.

The strict Pharisees reasoned anyone from God would not even violate the form of the ten commandments, as one from God must be better and more perfect. If the law was inviolable moral code then God would not even come close to breaking it, He is perfect. It is worth noting that the Pharisees are not completely off. God does not come close to sinning. God is perfect. They held that perfect means perfect, and no work means not even a little. When the law says not to light a fire on the sabbath, does that mean not even a match? Is a little white lie not a sin?

⁸I have often wondered why clay? A comment I read from John MacArthur indicated that Jesus healed the man as Jesus made man in the first place, by forming clay. While I doubt that Jesus was making new eyes as John suggests- else why wash the clay off. I think Jesus was reminding us of the creation, starting with Jesus as the true light and going through to the forming of man. Why? Quite simply because He is showing His deity that He might be glorified as He deserves. John indicates that is why the man was born blind, and that is the major argument of chapter 8- the diety of Christ.

There are only three ways to look at this situation:

	the sabbath is moral law	the sabbath is not moral law
little versions of sins are sin	Jesus sinned - position of some Pharisees	Jesus did not sin - my position.
little versions of sins aren't sin	Jesus did not sin - position of rest of Pharisees and every Christian commentator I have checked	

The blind man and some of the Pharisees recognized that the healing is legitimate so Jesus had to be doing God's will. That implies that Jesus did not sin, which leaves us with two options- little versions of sins aren't sins or the sabbath is not moral law.

If Jesus had made a enough mud to make bricks, and then formed bricks would it be sin? Is it the quantity and shape of the mud that matters for sin? I can't see a reason for that. I don't see Jesus skating by on technicalities. I don't see my Lord weighing the mud to see if it is safe. Besides we saw in the last section Jesus commented in John 5:17 that both He and the Father work every moment of every day. If He did not we would not exist. If the Sabbath is moral law then that is wrong, but God cannot do wrong. Which gives the law or God's nature? I hope that is not a serious question to anyone. God cannot do wrong so the Sabbath cannot be absolute, unchangeable, moral law.

3.5 The Day Jesus Taught in Synagogue

Jesus taught in the synagogue of wherever he went on the sabbath. Four verses, two from Mark and two from Luke record this, and indicate that it was his habit to do so. Jesus does not disrespect the Father, Jesus shows love for the commandment, but lets us know that Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath and can change it. The verses are listed below.

And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

Mr 1:21

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Mr 6:2

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Lu 4:16

And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

Lu 4:31

3.6 Resurrection and Ascension

The final type of verse mentioning the sabbath in the gospels are those referring to the day Jesus was in the tomb. Matthew and Mark record that the women waited till the end of the sabbath.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Mt 28:1

Both the word translated sabbath and the word translated week are the Greek sabbaton. I discuss the use of sabbaton for week in the chapter on Acts.

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.

Mr 16:1

An interesting note is the Bible records that the day before the sabbath is the preparation day. This is because you could not cook or do other work on the sabbath, so you had to do the work in advance.

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

Mr 15:42

⁵⁴ And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. ⁵⁵ And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶ And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

Luke 23:54-56

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Joh 19:31

3.7 Conclusions: How is it Celebrated?

We saw in the Old Testament that the sabbath rest is celebrated by doing no work whatsoever. It is claimed that the New Testament celebration of the sabbath is different⁹ and Jesus' healings are often cited. It is important to note that Jesus indicates healings do not violate the sabbath laws of God and thus do not provide a text for changing the composition of the sabbath celebration. Another common reference for the sabbath change is found in Mark 2, where Jesus' cites that He is Lord of the sabbath, however He does not say He is making a new set of sabbath observance, nor do any of the disciples in the entire New Testament. There is no basis for a new style of seventh day sabbath observance other than personal desires and theological systems, neither of which is authoritative to accomplish the desired end. Jesus does do work on the sabbath and command others, but He indicates it is because He so wills it. Jesus does not say this is a new style of celebration, rather He indicates it is His right to do what He wants with it. Certainly Jesus could change the sabbath, but he never does, thus the celebration of the sabbath continues to be the cessation of all work.

⁹Some also claim that Jesus restored the original intent, though this view clearly cannot be synchronized with even a casual reading of Exodus 20, 31, and 35.

Chapter 4

The Sabbath in Acts

As an interesting start for this chapter is to look at the first occurrence of the word sabbath in Acts.

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath days journey.

Ac 1:12

Jesus has just ascended into heaven and the disciples are returning to Jerusalem. The writer of Acts is Luke, a Greek doctor, and the recipient is Theophilus, from the name a Greek man¹. The important thing to see is that a Greek was writing a Greek and uses as a distance measure a sabbath day's journey². Luke took for granted that the distance would be known by Theophilus. Why? The only possible conclusions I can think of are:

1. The early Christians followed all the Jewish sabbath regulations, because they were required to.
2. The early Christians witnessed to Jews and so became familiar with Jewish custom so as not to violate Jewish sensibilities.

¹Some contend that Theophilus is actual a term to refer to God fearing Greek believers. I have no intention of getting in this discussion at this time as either understanding is fine for seeing the point I am making

²A sabbath days journey was 2000 cubits, or between 0.5 to 1 miles (authorities vary on cubit size). This size is not from God's word directly, but rather Jewish tradition. The Rabbis used passages like Joshua 3:4 to establish the amount God had the Israelites travel to worship in the time before they took the land as the basis for what could be done after. Overall this is a reasonable approach and the use, without correction in Acts, suggest God was not displeased with it. Some will rightly point out that the Pharisees played games with this measure and God was displeased with them, but this does not mean God disapproved of the measure, rather he disapproved of the abuse.

The first one requires following of even extra-Biblical requirements (distance traveled on a sabbath), which no one believes is required. Even seventh day adventists think the ceremonial requirements are gone. If point one is correct then even that is to lenient, as sabbath journeys are not even in the ceremonial law. Such requirements are clearly taught against in Scripture, such as Peter's famous dream of the unclean foods.

The second one does not indicated that the sabbath was or was not the day of celebration, it only notes the following of extra-biblical requirements could be followed as part of witnessing. This is entirely consistent with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

¹⁹ For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. ²⁰ And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; ²¹ To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. ²² To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. ²³ And this I do for the gospels sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

It is not possible to justify an obedience to the sabbath from this verse. We can justify a desire to show compassion and sensitivity.

4.1 Sabbath is Saturday

On the Paul's first missionary journey, he visited many cities bringing the good news. As was his custom, he went to the synagogue first. He went on the day when all the Jews would be present, the sabbath, which is Saturday. Notice what it says in Chapter 13 of Acts, the sabbath is the usual day of meeting for the Jews. Read for yourself Acts 13, noticing in particular the following four verses.

- Ac 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.
- Ac 13:27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.
- Ac 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.
- Ac 13:44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Shortly after returning from their missionary journey, the first judaizers appeared. The conflict prompted the Jerusalem Council in which we see

Ac 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Later on another missionary journey, Paul come to Philippi. No synagogue existed in Philippi, as having a synagogue required ten men to be present to hold any service. Jewish tradition dictates that barring a synagogue, a prayer site should be set up, preferably near water. We see Paul uses this tradition to find his Jewish brothers and sisters.

Ac 16:13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

The next two uses of the sabbath in Acts follow the same pattern.

- Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,
- Acts 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Note that it never connects these days as Christian worship, rather it is in the sense of witnessing to the Jews. The sabbath is thus always Saturday.

The final use is in Acts 20:7 where sabbaton is used to refer to a week. This is consistent with other passages, such as Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2,9, Luke 24:1, and John 20:1,19, where the term sabbaton is used for the word week. Luke 18:12 also uses the term sabbaton for week, and it is not possible to argue otherwise, as it makes no sense to fast twice in one day. Finally note that in the old testament the word sabbath was similarly used in Leviticus 23:15, and Deuteronomy 16:9. This is universally recognized by every theologian and Greek scholar I know, even across traditions and faiths. This also provides no support for sabbath continuation or Sunday sabbaths.

4.1.1 What Day is it Celebrated? Part II

The Bible clearly states in numerous places that the sabbath is the seventh day. No place in Scripture ever changes this. Some claim that the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's day by Scripture and the early church, is the new day the sabbath is to be celebrated on. Scripture never says that the Lord's day is the new sabbath or there would be no debate, only a question of obedience would remain³.

³It is usually noted by those in favor of the Lord's day as the new sabbath that the New Testament doesn't say it isn't the new sabbath. No matter which side is taken, it is important to understand that this is a bad argument. You cannot say everything that the New Testament does not deny is true. You can say what the New Testament does not deny may be true.

In arguing for the Lord's day as the new sabbath, we could certainly observe that the early church met on the Lord's day. Jesus also rose on it (hence the origin of the name), met with the disciple on it, Jesus ascended to heaven on it, the Holy Spirit came on it, and John was given the Revelation on it. The Lord's day is clearly an important day for the church, but this is not the same as being a sabbath. Nowhere does the Bible indicate that all labour ceased on the Lord's day. In fact Peter and the disciples were fishing on the first day when the risen savior told them to fish the other side and the catch was great. The risen savior also cooked food on the first day. If this was the new sabbath and it was a true sabbath and inviolable then these would be sins, which clearly cannot be.

Note that the early church was predominately Jewish so both the Lord's day and the sabbath were celebrated. If they were to be merged or a move was to take place, certainly some teaching would have been given. This is a major issue and God's silence mitigates against a change of days. If God had thus intended, the early Jewish believers would have needed to know, but no such command is given from God. Similar discussions, as I am indicating are missing for a sabbath change, can be seen on clean foods and circumcision, for instance. If the sabbath changed why is there no discussion? The weekly sabbath is clearly seen to be Saturday, the seventh day.

Chapter 5

Paul and the Sabbath

5.1 Sabbath is Not Part of the New Covenant

Paul was not a man to mince words or hold back. He followed the Lord faithfully and his commitment to serving God was amazing. In all his letters he only uses the word sabbath twice and hints at it a third time. No where does he advocate worshipping on the sabbath. Let us look at his explicit mention of the sabbath.

¹⁶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: ¹⁷ Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. ¹⁸ Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. ²⁰ Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, ²¹ (Touch not; taste not; handle not; ²² Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³ Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Col 2:16-23

Some try to say that the reference to new moon indicates we are not dealing with the weekly sabbath, however we saw in our Old Testament studies that this is not the case. The new moon was required of God. The term for sabbath is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word for sabbath. There is no mistaking in the text that Paul is speaking of the

sabbath in general as prescribed in the old covenant¹, thus none can judge based on the sabbath. If the sabbath was moral law, then you not only could, but you must judge on the sabbath. Paul furthermore says that the sabbath is among the rest of the ‘ceremonial’ requirements² that are mere shadows of Christ. As Paul continues on this topic he speaks of those who try to beguile others into thinking otherwise, and are just vain self-seekers. Paul speaks of them (those who judge on the basis of the old covenant, which includes sabbath worship) as separated from Christ. These are scary descriptions which you should examine closely. Paul is without a doubt warning that clinging to the old covenant, when the reality has come, is doing great evil. There is no way, I can see, that allows us to avoid his words. We either comply or find ourselves fighting God.

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.

1 Corinthians 16:2

The word translated week is sabbaton. Some might naively claim this to be a reference to a Sunday sabbath I suppose, but that is not justifiable from the text. The phrase is “kata mian sabbaton.” Kata is distributive indicating every first day of the week. Sabbaton being used in this verse as marking a week. This was discussed in the section on Acts (it is used in this way in Acts 20:7) and the interested reader is referred back for other scriptures in the old and new testaments that use sabbaton or sabbath in this way.

¹ Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.² For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

¹Recently, some seventh day adventists brought by my church a bunch of books titles “Ten Commandments: Twice Removed”, where it is actually claimed that the ten commandments were a different covenant than the Mosaic covenant. Never mind the complete lack of support for this claim. The ‘evidence’ provided comes essentially in the form of verses that speak of the greatness of the ten commandments (not under dispute by either side and thus not germane to the discussion), or in the form of the assertion that the ten commandments are different and that they can then ignore any reference to the end of the law. Stating a premise then showing that in your reading of verses you can completely ignore the explicit words and context of a passage is not proof of correctness, it is evidence of ignorance at best.

²As was mentioned earlier, there is no division of the law into pieces: moral, ceremonial, civil. Just like the error of the seventh day adventists, who think the ten commandments are a separate covenant, many Christians also think incorrectly that the ten commandments are still in effect because of other non-existent distinctions. Some may complain that I distinguish between seventh day adventists and Christians. I do so because they have a different gospel message. Seventh day adventism asserts that even those trusting in Jesus will be judged by the law in the ‘retributive judgement’ and if you fail that judgement, by say not worshipping on Saturday, you will still go to hell. This is works based righteousness and so a different gospel. Paul says in Galatians chapter 1 that those who bring a different gospel than what he was teaching (salvation by faith alone, not of works) brought a different gospel and were eternally cursed. Paul under the holy spirit makes the distinction, I just obey. That said, I am still to be kind to them, and in fact I have many friends who are seventh day adventists. I pray for them often and try to show them the Savior and His truth.

³ Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. ⁴ Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵ One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶ He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ⁷ For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸ For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lords. ⁹ For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. ¹⁰ But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹ For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹² So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³ Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brothers way. ¹⁴ I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵ But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸ For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. ¹⁹ Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. ²⁰ For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. ²¹ It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. ²² Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ²³ And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Romans 14

This passage is a covering of weaker brothers and charity. Here Paul indicates that we can treat all days the same or one as special. Observe first that it does mean the sabbath is not a requirement. Does this mean the sabbath is an option? No. It never says we can optionally follow the old covenant, it says we can decide to make our worship day as

special days or we can treat them all the same. You can rest on Sunday if you want; I do, as it helps me concentrate on the Lord and adds to my enjoyment of the day. Am I being hypocritical and observing the sabbath while stating the sabbath is over? Not at all. I don't rest because of an ordinance, I rest because it makes me and my family more worshipful. I can do something if it helps me worship, too. Sometimes it is much more worshipful for my wife if we go out to eat, so we do. Sometimes she and the kids just want to relax at home, so we do that. I have freedom in Christ to worship God. I was freed to serve, and what a joyous serving it is. Glory to His name!

Some claim this is not referring to the sabbath (it does not use the word or say one in seven). Two questions I think will clarify my understanding of this. First, what else could be meant? You might say holy days, but recall the old and new testament say those are sabbaths. It is only man made systems that deny what the scriptures state. No escape there. Trying to argue birthday or other such personal dates does not at all fit the context. No escape there. Only one thing makes sense, the sabbath, as the Roman church was started by faithful Jews returning from Jerusalem after Pentecost. Second, if the verse said we should esteem one day as special, wouldn't you use it to defend the sabbath for today? If we are being honest, we know those who want the sabbath to be for today would certainly claim this passage was speaking of the sabbath if it said that one day should be esteemed over others. It is only because this verse does not say what is desired, do we doubt the clear implications. Consider for yourselves.

Chapter 6

Hebrews

Hebrews main theme is the superiority of Christ and the new covenant He brings. In Chapter 4, the old testament rest is in view. Remember, sabbath means rest.

6.1 Chapter 4

¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. ² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. ³ For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. ⁵ And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. ⁶ Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: ⁷ Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. ⁸ For if Jesus¹ had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. ¹⁰ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

¹¹ Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. ¹² For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we

¹This is referring to the one we call Joshua, he and Jesus Christ both had the Hebrew name Y'sua.

have to do. ¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. ¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4

Notice in particular that verse 4 the author of Hebrews specifically mentions that he is speaking of the seventh day when he is referring to rest, and then mentions in verse 5 that they never entered the rest. We know that at least certain groups and during certain periods of time, the people celebrated the sabbath (seventh day), and yet they did not enter the rest. The first ten verses emphasize that throughout the old testament period this was the case, even with notable men like David and Joshua. Verse 9 tells us there remains a rest - sabbatismos (a transliteration of sabbath into Greek). If the old testament sabbath was the ultimate rest, no rest would remain (i.e. come after it). The ultimate rest is described in the remainder of the chapter.

Verses 11-16 changes the direction to how we are to enter into the rest of God. Verse 11 speaks of how we are to put effort to rest, unlike the people of the old testament who did not believe². It almost seems contradictory, laboring to rest. If we were talking about sabbath observance it would be contradictory, as the sabbath required no labor. The sabbath was a type, demonstrating a more complete truth that was to come. We are to work at believing. Not a casual, lazy, God will grow me attitude. We are to be serious about our following of God. That is what the labor is referring to.

Verse 12 emphasizes how God's word penetrates through the cover we put up for others. God's word cannot be fooled because it can penetrate into our thoughts, it reveals our intentions. Even the things we hide from ourselves, like a mean spirited attitude is on display before the word of God. Many don't like this, but as John 3 points out,

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. ²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

John 3:19-21

²I am not saying all people in the old testament did not believe. Hebrews 11 clearly indicates that there were many, who looked forward to the salvation the Messiah would bring.

Verse 13 continues the point that God knows all, sees all, and nothing can be hidden from Him. This is a problem for us as all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). We are not better than those of the old testament, who did not enter God's rest. Verse 14 shows that our great hope is in Jesus, for He is our high priest and He is able to save us. We need to hold fast to our faith in Him as was stated in verse 11. Verse 15 then points out that Jesus knows where we are and what we go through, because He went through it too, only He never failed. How does this give us rest? Look at verse 16. We can come boldly to God, for His mercy and grace. We have His help in time of need. We can rest in the salvation of Christ. Better than a one day celebration, we have a life of rest and peace in our marvelous Lord. We are to labor in our faith to rest in Christ's forgiveness.

Why must we work at trusting in Him? Is it weakness on His part? Certainly not! The weakness is ours. We keep trying to earn it ourselves. We keep trying to do the right ceremony. We keep trying to say the right prayer. We want to do it ourselves. We even want to chose how to celebrate God's rest so that we are doing it. The work is in not following our ideas, but resting and having confidence in what He has already done rather than in what we are to do. We are like people, who run around fussing and fidgiting before a party, when everything is already prepared. Salvation is accomplished, nothing can be added or removed. Legalism kills the joy of our salvation. We must labor to rest in what Jesus accomplished.

⁸ Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. ⁹ For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. ¹⁰ In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.

Zechariah 3:8-10

Chapter 7

Conclusions

What more can I say? I think the scriptures we have seen can leave no conclusion but that the sabbath as practiced in the old testament (or updated by Christians) is not for today. It served a purpose to point to the savior, but when the reality comes we are not to cling to the shadows. Rest in the salvation of Jesus and the glorious freedom we have to serve Him with all our hearts.

Search the scriptures. The appendix has a list of all passages I have found, which have sabbath or its variants used or directly referenced (such as seventh day). I have left out verses that are questioned (such as Romans 14) so it cannot be said I am trying to skew the list. I did not include the one verse that speaks of the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10), because it does not say it is a sabbath, and early Christian use of the term was refer to the first day of the week as the Lord's Day and the last as the sabbath. Many Jewish descended Christians observed both so they could bring the gospel to the Jews (for instance see Paul's actions in Acts). In any case, early use clearly showed a distinction between the two concepts, and never does the Bible even hint that the Lord's Day is a sabbath. Certainly it is a time of worship, but the two concepts are not identical.

Search the scriptures and see. Read the verses around the citations to get the context. Don't filter scripture with doctrine, rather be as the Bereans (Acts 17:10-15) and check all teaching with scripture. If I have erred may God correct me through His word and the loving intervention of His saints. If I am right, may it be honored in your life. May God bless you as you seek His truth in His word.

Soli Deo Gloria

Appendix A

Every Verse with Sabbath in It

A.1 Old Testament

The following verses are all the verses in the old testament, which contain sabbath or sabbaths in them. I have not made any attempt to piece them together, as I intend them not for reading but to encourage reading the passages in your own Bible and thus to grapple with the text directly.

Ex 16:23 And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

Ex 16:25 And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field.

Ex 16:26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

Ex 16:29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

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

Ex 20:10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

Ex 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Ex 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.

Ex 31:14 Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Ex 31:15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

Ex 31:16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

Ex 35:2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

Ex 35:3 Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day.

Le 16:31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

Le 19:3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

Le 19:30 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

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

Le 23:11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Le 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

Le 23:16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

Le 23:24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

Le 23:32 It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Le 23:38 Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.

Le 23:39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath.

Le 24:8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.

Le 25:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD.

Le 25:4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

Le 25:6 And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee,

Le 25:8 And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

Le 26:2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

Le 26:34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

Le 26:35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

Le 26:43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

Nu 15:32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

Nu 28:9 And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof:

Nu 28:10 This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

De 5:12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

De 5:14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

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

2Ki 4:23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.

2Ki 11:5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the kings house;

2Ki 11:7 And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

2Ki 11:9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

2Ki 16:18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the kings entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

1Ch 9:32 And other of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the

shewbread, to prepare it every sabbath.

1Ch 23:31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD:

2Ch 2:4 Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.

2Ch 8:13 Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

2Ch 23:4 This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the doors;

2Ch 23:8 So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go out on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses.

2Ch 31:3 He appointed also the kings portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD.

2Ch 36:21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Ne 9:14 And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:

Ne 10:31 And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

Ne 10:33 For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

Ne 13:15 In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.

Ne 13:16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

Ne 13:17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

Ne 13:18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

Ne 13:19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

Ne 13:21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

Ne 13:22 And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

Ps 92:1 ¶A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:

Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Isa 56:2 Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

Isa 56:4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;

Isa 56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;

Isa 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

Isa 66:23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

Jer 17:21 Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem;

Jer 17:22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

Jer 17:24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein;

Jer 17:27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be

quenched.

La 1:7 Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths.

La 2:6 And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest.

Eze 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.

Eze 20:13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

Eze 20:16 Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.

Eze 20:20 And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.

Eze 20:21 Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

Eze 20:24 Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers idols.

Eze 22:8 Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.

Eze 22:26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

Eze 23:38 Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths.

Eze 44:24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.

Eze 45:17 And it shall be the princes part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.

Eze 46:1 Thus saith the Lord GOD; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the

day of the new moon it shall be opened.

Eze 46:3 Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD in the sabbaths and in the new moons.

Eze 46:4 And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.

Eze 46:12 Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily unto the LORD, one shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate.

Ho 2:11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

Am 8:5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

A.2 New Testament

The following verses are all the verses in the new testament, which contain sabbath or sabbaths in them. I have not made any attempt to piece them together, as I intend them not for reading but to encourage reading the passages in your own Bible and thus to grapple with the text directly.

Mt 12:1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

Mt 12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

Mt 12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Mt 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Mt 12:10 And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

Mt 12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

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

Mt 24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Mt 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Mr 1:21 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

Mr 2:23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

Mr 2:24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

Mr 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

Mr 2:28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Mr 3:2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

Mr 3:4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

Mr 6:2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Mr 15:42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

Mr 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.

Mr 16:2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week(sabbaton), they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Mr 16:9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week(sabbaton), he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Lu 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Lu 4:31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

Lu 6:1 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

Lu 6:2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

Lu 6:5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Lu 6:6 And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

Lu 6:7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Lu 6:9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

Lu 13:10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

Lu 13:14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Lu 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

Lu 13:16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

Lu 14:1 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

Lu 14:3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

Lu 14:5 And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

Lu 18:12 I fast twice in the week(sabbaton), I give tithes of all that I possess.

Lu 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

Lu 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

Lu 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week(sabbaton), very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

Joh 5:9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

Joh 5:10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

Joh 5:16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Joh 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Joh 7:22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

Joh 7:23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

Joh 9:14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Joh 9:16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

Joh 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Joh 20:1 The first day of the week(sabbaton) cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Joh 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week(sabbaton), 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.

Ac 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath days journey.

Ac 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

Ac 13:27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

Ac 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Ac 13:44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Ac 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Ac 16:13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

Ac 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Ac 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Ac 20:7 And upon the first day of the week(sabbaton), when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

1 Co 16:2 Upon the first day of the week(sabbaton) let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

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

Hebrews 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest (sabbatismos) to the people of God.