

Exodus 31:12-17

Wednesday

Read Exodus 31:12-17

What does this passage tell Israel to observe? (verse 13)

Why? (verse. 13)

- 1.
- 2.

How? (verses 14-17)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What does Moses say the Sabbath is a sign of? (Verses 16-17)

[For further study, read Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11. Think through how Jesus fulfilled the Covenant for us and what significance this has for us. Also think about what the author of the book of Hebrews means by the word "rest".]

How seriously did God want Israel to take this command? *[For further study in the area of how seriously God took this command, read and think about these passages: Ezekiel 20:12-13; 22:8; 22:38, Jeremiah 17:21-27, Isaiah 56:2 and 58:13-14.]*

Some of the greatest scholars and godliest saints have disagreed over the keeping of this day for Christians. In my Christian experience I have struggled to know what God's word teaches on this topic. I have held either side at one time or another and have come to believe that we are to keep the Sabbath. However, today's devotions are not intended to convince you of one side over the other, but to encourage you to study the issue. The following are arguments both for keeping the Sabbath and not keeping the Sabbath. If you already are convinced one way or the other, give careful consideration to the arguments and let the opposing arguments challenge your thinking. If you don't have strong convictions either way, think through the arguments and try to determine if they are valid arguments or not. Look up the Scripture references that are given and give careful thought to what God's Word says.

REASONS FOR KEEPING THE SABBATH

- This commandment refers back to the pre-fall order (Genesis 2:1-3). God sanctified the seventh day before the fall. It is proper to assume this was kept by Adam and Eve before the fall if there were more than 7 days after creation and before the fall. It would also be proper to assume this would have continued to be the practice if there had not been a fall.
- Jesus teaches us that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27-8).
- All Christians agree that we should keep the other 9 laws. How can you keep 9 and throw out one?
- Although Jesus argued with the Pharisees about **HOW** we should keep the Sabbath, he never argued that we should not keep the Sabbath.
- This command was not exclusive to Jews; it was given for the Gentiles – the "alien in your midst" as well (Exodus 23:12 & Deuteronomy 5:14).
- There is no clear passage that says we are not to keep the Sabbath.
- The Sabbath is singled out in Exodus 31:12-17 as being a sign of the "perpetual covenant." The Greek words used to translate this term are the same Greek words found in Hebrews 13:20 and translated "eternal covenant." The sign again rests upon the act of God in creation before the fall.
- Even admitting there is a spiritual rest as is clearly taught from Hebrews 4:8-11, there is still a physical rest emphasized in the command (for the family, the animals, and the foreigner).

REASONS FOR NOT KEEPING THE SABBATH

- As important as it was in the Old Testament, there is no record in the New Testament of a command to Gentile converts to keep the Sabbath.

- Colossians 2:16-17 says, "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; their reality, however, is found in Christ."
- Romans 14:5-8 states we have freedom to keep the day or not to keep the day.
- Keeping the Sabbath was a sign of the covenant (Exodus 31:16). Jesus fulfilled that covenant and the types that go with it. Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11 as well as Colossians 2:16-17 make this clear.
- Just as we do not sacrifice animals because Christ is our sacrifice, so we don't keep the Sabbath, because Christ has given us the spiritual rest this commandment typifies.

KEEP IT OR NOT

Whether you believe we should keep the commandment or not, we are still commanded to assemble together. (Hebrews 10:25) In fact, there are many commands given in the New Testament to believers to do things together. From teaching, encouraging, and helping one another, to serving, confronting, praying for, and building up one another, we are commanded to do things together including worshiping God together with praise, the Lord's Supper, confession, singing, and hearing God's Word. Whether we observe the Sabbath as a day God commands us to or not, God is still sovereign over our time and commands us to make time for these things.

Which Day

Friday

Another area where godly Christians disagree concerns what day Christians should meet. Currently it is pretty much an argument among those who believe Christians are bound to keep the Sabbath (or at least one day in seven).

Read the following verses. For each of the following verses seek to discern if they are referring to the day Christians met to worship:

1 Corinthians 16:2

Acts 20:7

Revelation 1:10