

The Lord's Day

Key Verse:
***“Remember the
sabbath day, to
keep it holy.”***
—Exodus 20:8

Selected Scripture:
***Exodus 20:8-11;
31:12-17***

TO PROPERLY APPRECIATE the meaning of the Sabbath is to understand its origin as part of God's dealings with Israel. He adopted the Jewish nation as his special possession out of all of the peoples of the world, declaring, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”

(Amos 3:2) With them God made the Law Covenant through Moses at Sinai. Later, he sent them his messengers, the prophets, and finally, his Son. No other nation received this special favor from God. When the Jews rejected Jesus, and he took the Law Covenant “out of the way, nailing it to his cross,” it was neither extended to any other nation, nor to the church.—Col. 2:14

Accordingly, it is not for us to demand that leaders of the Christian world should enforce the Jewish Sabbath or any other specific Sabbath observance. We are to remember that the kingdoms of earth are still under the dominion of the “god of this world,” by God's permission. (II Cor. 4:4) He is not, therefore, commanding that mankind observe a special Sabbath day or any other feature of the Mosaic Law. Christian believers are not under the Law Covenant, as the apostle declares, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—Rom. 6:14

Being free from an arrangement which was based upon perfect obedience in the flesh, we should be comforted by the thought that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were

approved of the Lord without the Law. Their faith in God constituted an obligation to do the Divine will to the extent of their knowledge and ability. The same is true with us as the followers of Christ. The Scriptures assure us that we have been adopted into God's family and made partakers of his Spirit. (Rom. 8:15,16) Walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," means our rule of action must henceforth be love, because "love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. 8:1; 13:10

Upon this basis we see that God is forming a new group of individuals gathered out from all nations, of whom the apostle says, "Ye are . . . a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." (I Pet. 2:9) Although we are free from the Mosaic Law, we derive a great blessing by examining it because we recognize that it was just, holy, and good. We should seek to appreciate its inner meaning and its spirit, but with the recognition that we are justified by the precious blood of Christ, and not by the "works of the law."—Rom. 5:8,9; Gal. 2:16

Hence, as we look at the Decalogue we grasp the depth of its significance. With respect to the command, "Remember the sabbath day," as spiritual Israelites we realize that we are not under bondage to a day. Rather, we come to know the intent of this command and seek to be in harmony with its spirit. We find that the real meaning of the Sabbath is the "rest" of faith, based upon acceptance of Jesus as our Redeemer and making a consecration of our will to do God's will. Thus, we begin to enter into this rest. Henceforth, if we are faithful to the Lord and abide in his love, our Sabbath never ends. "We which have believed do enter into rest."—Heb. 4:3

Our "rest" of faith should continue throughout all the days of the week. It is thus that spiritual Israel keeps the Sabbath—each day—resting in the finished work of Christ, ceasing from our own works, and from all endeavors to justify ourselves through the Law. (Heb. 4:10) To us, every day is to be remembered, "to keep it holy." ■