

Hope Trending

[10] The Change—No More Fear of Wrong

- The Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) in the *Message* translation: “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days and do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don’t do any work—not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the foreign guest visiting in your town. For in six days God made Heaven, Earth, and sea, and everything in them; he rested on the seventh day. Therefore God blessed the Sabbath day; he set it apart as a holy day.”
- The seventh day Sabbath is a Gift Day from our Creator to remind us *the Maker of all things loves and wants me.*
- Sigve Tonstad: “The call to remember the day goes beyond concern for the day as such; it cannot be severed from the memory that is intrinsic to the day. At the deepest level the entire commandment has a narrational character: the Sabbath tells a story.” (*The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* 102)
- Tonstad: “In the biblical perspective the Sabbath interrupts the routine of clock time and the obligation of work by calling all creation to a day of rest according to the great clock of nature. As daylight fades every Friday evening . . . the Sabbath breaks the cycle of business and the struggle for subsistence. At the setting of the sun, clock time yields to Creation time in order to respond to a higher summons, mediated by the clock of Creation. Human priorities, set by the clock and the necessity of working, come face to face with God’s generous provision.” (382)
- Mark 2:28—“For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”
- In the Gift of the seventh day Sabbath, we discover the Gift of the Father and the Friend and the Maker we have been looking for.

HOPE

- No wonder the Sabbath is woven like a golden thread from Genesis through Revelation
 - All the Old Testament heroes celebrated the Sabbath.
 - All the New Testament Christians celebrated the Sabbath.
 - Even the Maker of all things rested in the tomb on His Sabbath Day.
 - 8 “first day” references in the New Testament—and not a single one hints of Christ changing the seventh day Sabbath.

- Then how did the change come about?

- Consider the research of Samuele Bacchiocchi at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome):
 - In 135 AD Jews rebelled against the Roman Empire in the Barkokeba Rebellion—Rome crushed the rebellion, razed Jerusalem to the ground and Emperor Hadrian declared Judaism a *religio illicita* (an illegal/outlawed religion).
 - The challenge for 2nd century Christians was to separate themselves from the now illegal Judaism, including the celebration of the Bible Sabbath, which both Jews and Christians had been observing together on the seventh day.
 - Thus began a gradual effort within Christianity to minimize the observance of the Sabbath, shifting instead to a commemoration of Christ’s resurrection on Sunday.
 - In the fourth century the shift became “permanent” when Emperor Constantine issued an imperial edict (March 7, 321 AD) declaring that “the venerable day of the Sun” would become a day of rest for all citizens—not a religious day of rest, but a day to refrain from work.
 - It was a politically savvy action that united the pagans and Christians of the empire.
 - By 360 AD the Christian Council of Laodecia ruled: “Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day. . . . ; but the Lord’s day they shall especially honor and . . . if possible, do no work on that day.” (9BC 885)
 - Eusebius: “All things whatsoever that were prescribed for the [Bible] Sabbath, we have transferred them to the Lord’s day, as being more authoritative and more highly regarded and first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath” (in J. P. Migne’s “Patrologie” p 23, 1169-1172)

- John A. O’Brien: “But since Saturday, not Sunday, is specified in the Bible, isn’t it curious that non-Catholics who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible and not from the Church, observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Yes, of course, it is inconsistent; but this change was made about fifteen centuries before Protestantism was born, and by that time the custom was universally observed. They have continued the custom, even though it rests upon the authority of the Catholic Church and not upon an explicit text in the Bible. That observance remains as a reminder of the Mother Church from which the non-Catholic sects broke away—like a boy running away from home but still carrying in his pocket a picture of his mother or a lock of her hair.” (*The Faith of Millions* 400-401)

- Jesus: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).
- Because *the Maker of all things loves and wants me.*

Questions:

___When it comes to determining right and wrong, how strong are social and cultural pressures?

___For the follower of Christ what should be the guiding authority on how to live?

___What would you say is the bottom line to the Bible truth of the seventh day Sabbath?

___Would you like to follow Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath?