

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #30

God Looks at Sunday

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Last week, I suggested that God would probably be merciful to anyone who fails to keep the Sabbath holy out of a lack of knowledge about the Sabbaths of the Lord. It certainly is more important to honor Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, than to contend with other believers about whether Saturday or Sunday is the true Day of the Lord.

However, I did raise a concern about those who disobey or profane the Sabbath of God AND teach others to do so. There are professed Christian teachers who know, or should know, that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath and His holy day is NOT Sunday. I cited one scripture that could be interpreted to show that they will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

In the end though, it matters little what I believe about Sunday versus Sabbath-keeping. The only thing that really matters is what does God think about it? How does God look at Sunday? How might He, or Jesus, judge those who profess belief in the Father and the Son yet do not accept Jesus as the Lord of the seventh-day Sabbath? Are there any clues in Scripture?

Well here is one line of thought. IF Sunday-keepers are DECEIVED, who actually deceives them? The Bible claims that Satan will deceive the whole world in Rev. 12: 9:

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world: he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Now, what does Satan deceive the whole world about? Well, it would almost certainly include some false understanding about just who Jesus was and is. Jews to this day remain blind to Him being the promised Messiah. Some professing Christians reject His birth by a virgin with the Holy Spirit of God having been His father. Others claim that Jesus was not God in the flesh, and not divine at all. He was just a good Jewish man, a rabbi and perhaps another prophet of God.

But, another deception about Jesus that is far more prevalent in the world of Christians already is that He was the Lord of the first day; Sunday. Have you ever heard of that possible perverse deception before? There are Sabbath keeping Christians who believe that Sunday worship is the “mark of the beast!” Ridiculous, that’s a new one, you say?

Well, allow me to provide a scenario that goes with this interpretation. Consider that, according to Scripture, the mark is something forced on everyone alive at the end of the age. Without this mark one cannot buy and sell as indicated in Rev. 13: 16-17:

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to

receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Now, you have probably heard many ideas of just what this mark of the beast is. One popular notion suggests some kind of implanted computer chip in your forehead or right hand that can be read at a cash register. Only now, in what might be the end times, has the technology for such a device and capability to use it been available to a world ruler.

On the other hand, the mark could be more spiritual than physical. It could be a marked belief in your mind to remember Sunday as the Lord's day. And, the mark of your right hand tends to refer to your action to keep it holy. If you are found in a Church on Sunday, that would mark you and everyone could see and discern you as a Sunday-keeper.

I will leave the nature of the mark of the beast to others to debate and decide. However, what is clear from Scripture is that without the mark you cannot buy or sell goods or services. Is there any link here with Sabbath-keeping? You bet there is! We find it in Neh. 10: 31:

If the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day;

If you had the Sabbath mark of God, you were not to buy food or merchandise on the Sabbath day or a annual holy day associated with the Feasts of the Lord. However, if you accept the Sunday mark of the beast, you will be allowed to buy or sell on the Sabbath or any day. Without the mark of the beast you will not buy or sell on ANY day. Does this sound a bit like an anti-Christ decree to you? The anti-Christ will turn the things of God inside out and upside down to deceive believers in Christ.

Is the prophesied man of sin, referred to as the beast, the one who forces his mark on everyone against everything God and the Christ commanded? You can bet on it! Who introduced Sunday-keeping to the Church of God? Was it not a man with great power and authority; the Roman Emperor Constantine? And, who ruled over the Church of God and established its days of worship but the Bishop of Rome, the man now called Pope?

Consider this. Scripture is clear that before Jesus, the Lamb of God, returns to earth for His millennial reign as King of kings, the man called the beast and Anti-Christ, will be revealed. Some believe the Roman Empire will be revived in that day.

This end time Anti-Christ will appear to be a man of peace and deceive many, including those in Jerusalem, and the whole world. He will have received what appeared to be a mortal wound yet is revived to life. Who is the Anti-Christ like? The Messiah, Jesus! He will be so convincing that even the elect of God, which would include Jews still waiting for their Messiah, could be easily deceived.

But, apparently, not all of them will be deceived by this man nor take his mark. I ask you, if there is one issue that would make any Jew leery about a man who claimed to be God what would it be? Could it be that Sunday and not the Sabbath is the day of the Lord? I do not think any Jew would believe, follow or receive the mark such a man requires.

And, what day would you suppose that this Anti-Christ will claim to be lord over? How about Sunday? And, if he, with the help and adulation and testimony of the false prophet (whom some believe is the then Bishop of Rome, or the Pope like Constantine before him) declares Sunday to be his day of worship for the whole world for all people, will most Christians rejoice? Of course they will! It may be another sign to them that Jesus has finally returned and is ready to rule with a rod of iron.

I am not proclaiming this scenario as the future course of events. But, it is not beyond the realm of possibility, or Bible prophecy, concerning the end times. There is another facet of this belief that helps fill in the puzzle of the end times. That puzzle involves whether believers in Jesus as the Christ, do or do not go through what the Bible calls the Great Tribulation on the earth. This includes the issue of when the rapture (a snatching away like unto a thief) of the church, the true believers in Christ, occurs? Is it before, during or after this great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble.

Again, my purpose today is not in trying to resolve these prophetic controversies. However, another belief of some Sabbath keepers is that Sunday keepers WILL NOT be in the first resurrection. And, they will all go through the Great Tribulation and suffer the terrible days of the wrath of God that comes upon the whole earth.

I should also point out that this belief is NOT the same as saying that Sunday keepers will not be saved. In this scenario, Sunday keepers, and all who did not hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and the gospel will have a chance to understand the Sabbath at the end of the millennium. If they then accept it, they will be placed at God's right hand in the white throne judgment. However, they will go through the Great Tribulation at the start of the millennium and not be part of the Kingdom of God on earth for the thousand years.

This idea is connected to another Scriptural prophecy. That is that both the Sabbaths and Feasts of the LORD will be kept by the whole world during the millennial reign of Jesus as King over all the earth. We find described in the prophecy of Zechariah in Chapter 14 the future coming of the Day of the Lord when Jesus returns and His feet touch down on the Mount of Olives from where He rose to heaven. Here we see in Verse 16 scriptural proof that the Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated each year by the survivors of the Great Tribulation AFTER Jesus wins the Battle of Armageddon:

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

And, at the end of the prophecy of Isaiah, at the time of the LORD'S creation of the new

heavens and new earth after the second coming of Jesus, we find how worship of God shall be done during His Kingdom reign. Reading from Isa. 66: 22-23:

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I shall make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says the LORD.

Now, I do not know how much clearer this great prophet of God can be? We can see that all flesh (that does not mean only Israelites) will come to worship before Me from one Sabbath to another. No one will worship God from one Sunday to another. It simply is NOT the day of the week He sanctified. It never was. It is not now. And it will NOT be in the future. I can only be sorry if you are living under a different and contrary belief.

But, the link I was making is that those who believe that ONLY Sabbath keeping Christians will be in the first resurrection and enter the Kingdom of God on earth use this to explain that in order to be priests and kings with Jesus in the Kingdom, you will have to know how to keep the Sabbaths and Feasts of the Lord BEFORE He returns. This is our training and rehearsal.

Can I prove beyond any doubt that this is the Truth of God? No. But, it could be true. So, why take the chance? Why follow man when God makes His desire and plan for worship of Him so clear?

There is another view of whether Sabbath-keeping is important to God that I do feel more strongly about. Jesus told us about two great commandments in the law of God. I hope you can agree that God does express His perfect will in His law, especially the law of the Ten Commandments that He wrote in stone with His own finger. When asked by a lawyer, which is the great commandment in the law, Jesus answers this way in Mat. 22: 37-40:

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And, the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’”

I agree with those who see the Ten Commandments as the way you show that love for the LORD AND for your neighbor. That is how that within the Ten Commandments hang all that is written in the Law and in the Prophets.

Further, it is clear that Commandments Five through Ten deal with ways for us to love our neighbors. Jesus even quoted five of them to the rich young man who asked Him “what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” Jesus left out the Tenth against coveting. It seems clear that the young man kept all those which Jesus cited. When Jesus then tested the Tenth Commandment, asking the young man to sell all he had and give the money to the poor and follow Him, the man went away sorrowful. He coveted his

possessions too much and will thereby lose his eternal life.

Let's be crystal clear. Is keeping the commandment not to murder sufficient to obtain eternal life? Of course not! It is necessary but not sufficient. I see no other possible explanation except that you must obey all six of the commandments that specify a deeper meaning for what it means to love a neighbor so that you can inherit eternal life.

Furthermore, I would hope you would agree that should a very loving atheist or Buddhist keep the last six commandments with their neighbor perfectly, it would NOT guarantee them the eternal life offered to the people of the God of the Bible. Why not? The answer is very simple. That does not meet the first and greatest commandment of love for God. And, how does one show this genuine love for God? I believe you MUST obey the first four commandments. You MUST:

- 1) have no other gods before Me
- 2) not make any graven image
- 3) not take the name of the LORD thy in vain
- 4) remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,
in order to have eternal life.

For me, it seems plain that we show love to God by how we worship Him. If we have any God before Him, if we bow down to carved images, if we take or use the name of God in vain OR if we don't remember and keep His Sabbath day holy, how can He possibly conclude that we love Him? And, if we do three out of four, is that sufficient to gain us eternal life? What do you think?

The answer may be a bit scary. Can we pick a few of the Ten Commandments and obey them and ignore others and expect to have eternal life? I am NOT trying to scare you into becoming a Sabbath-keeper. I am NOT making a decree that by ignoring the Fourth Commandment you are bound to be least in the kingdom of heaven, not be in the first resurrection, go through the Great Tribulation and wrath of God or lose your eternal life.

I am not gifted with the knowledge that any of those are the punishment that God will render to those who disobey His Sabbath command. I am comforted by the fact that I do not need to make such a judgment of anyone else. But, I have shared some possibilities that perhaps you have never heard of or considered seriously as a Sunday-keeper.

What I can testify to is that changing from a Sunday-keeper to a Sabbath-keeper has become a wonderful and superior way for me to worship God the Father and His Son Jesus, the Christ. Jesus was right. The Sabbath was made for man, including me and you. It is not a heavy yoke or burden. It is a delight says the LORD. Why won't you believe Him and try it? If you would like a simple pamphlet titled "Ten Reasons to Keep the Seventh Day Holy," contact LawstSheep Ministries and we will mail one free of charge.

The positive benefits of Sabbath-keeping are all the reason you should need to change

your way of worship. While we need to fear God, it is more correct to understand it as meaning to hold God in awe for He is able to judge and punish the unrighteous. The 24-hour Sabbath is a great way to show our love, awe and fear of God by worship He desires.

If you also would like the companion pamphlet, "Ten Reasons Christians Don't Keep the Fourth Commandment," that I offered last Sabbath, but forgot to request it, just ask today for both pamphlets dealing with Sabbath keeping and we will send them to you.

I have been exploring the word of God to try to discover whether Sunday or Sabbath worship matters to God. The way to keep the Sabbath holy includes BOTH rest from our weekly labor AND having a holy convocation with brethren for the worship of God. Notice that the Fourth Commandment is placed in between the first three dealing ONLY with our relationship with God and the last six dealing ONLY with our relationship with our neighbor. It is like a bridge having a clear inward and outward expression of love BOTH for God and for our neighbor.

It seems that the core issue in all this is showing love to God and to one another as we worship God together on His days just as He commanded. The worship days of modern Christianity, both weekly and annual, are the creations of man. And how they are kept in practice bothers most devout Christians. Churches are often half full on Sundays. Holidays like Easter and Christmas are popular but seem to have lost their original intent.

The history is clear on how these changes in holy days came about. Their origins were in the first two centuries AFTER the ascension of Jesus and the subsequent giving of the Holy Spirit on the following "Pentecost." They have been practiced for almost 2,000 years. Such traditions are rooted deep in our concepts of worship. Have we been deceived so long that we will trade the truth of God for a much-repeated lie?

This process was already apparent to the Apostle Paul. His warning about trading the truth of God for a lie of men is to none other than to the saints in the Church at Rome. Paul's example in Rom.1: 21-24 was how unrighteous men "worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator."

Worship matters to God. I believe HOW and WHEN you worship God matters to Him. I would not recommend any group worship of God using an image of a man or an animal in the room. Scripture gives us several examples of improper worship. One involves the incense that God commands be burned before Him on the alter of incense. When the first born son of Aaron, the first High Priest of Israel, along with his brother Abihu, offer their incense in a profane manner, the LORD sends fire that devours the sons of the High Priest! Ministers and priests of God can't decide on their own how they would like to worship God. When I hear about how much someone LIKED their Sunday worship service, I can't help but wonder whether God liked it also?

But, more to the point of whether it matters to God WHEN He is worshiped we have another example in Scripture of a man changing when the Feast of Tabernacles was to be

held. That man was none other than King Jeroboam of the northern House of Israel, exalted by the LORD God of Israel to be ruler over the LORD'S people. We find the account in 1 Kings 12: 32:

Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the alter.

Of course, the Feast in Judah that Jeroboam was copying was the LORD'S Feast of Tabernacles which is commanded on the 15th day of the seventh month. Jeroboam made sacrifices at an alter on the day he proclaimed. This, and other changes in worship made by Jeroboam from the worship commanded by God was so evil and sinful that God chose to exterminate the house of Jeroboam from the face of the earth. Jeroboam sinned and made Israel sin in self-made worship. It was even a reason the LORD later uprooted the House of Israel out of the Promised Land and scattered them beyond the Jordan river.

The evil in changing the times of worship is even a characteristic of the spirit of the Anti-Christ in the fourth beast, an end-time king who many consider will lead the revived Roman Empire as found in Dan. 7: 25:

He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

Bible students see this as a reference to the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. Is the intention of this beast, the Anti-Christ, to change the times of worship and the law of the Sabbath? It is not difficult to understand that if Christ is Lord of the Sabbath and commands rest and worship on it, that the Anti-Christ will claim to be lord of a different day; even Sunday, and command worship of all people on it.

We can further see the deceit of this beast king or world ruler in Dan. 8: 25:

Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule

There seems to be an unmistakable similarity to what Emperor Constantine decreed about Sabbath versus Sunday along with his hate for the Jews and what this prophesied future world ruler will do as he tries to deceive people into rising up against the Lord of the Sabbath to change times and law and have dominion over the saints of God as their god.

In conclusion, I believe that God has given in His holy word, even written on the tablets of stone with His own finger, the day he wants His people to worship Him. Jesus was Lord of this seventh-day Sabbath. He kept the Sabbath day holy each week. He told the Samaritan woman at the well how those who know the Father would worship Him in the future. The Jews in Jerusalem knew what they worshipped. Salvation was of those Jews. Those Jews kept the Sabbath and the Feasts of the LORD.

But, Jesus did say a change was coming in worship. True worshipers would soon no

longer worship the Father in Jerusalem. Only the place of worship would change. However, the true worshipers would worship Him in spirit and truth for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

I believe that “in spirit” means with heartfelt, sincere love for God; love so deep and strong that you will make this day of worship different than any other day of the week when you do your labor or take your own pleasure. It is the entire 24-hour day that those who love God set aside completely as holy unto Him. He deserves this. Expressing such love may well take the gift of the Holy Spirit. Sabbath keeping in a ritualistic way out of obligation or fear would NOT be the kind of worshippers that the Father seeks.

“In truth” means in accordance with the word of God. For it is TRUTH. And, the day of the week that God sanctified as holy unto Himself is the seventh-day of the week. It was not, is not now, and will NEVER be Sunday, the first day of the week. I think that is how God looks at Sunday.

You may not know it but there are tens of millions of Christians who keep the Sabbath day holy and hold the testimony of Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath. Contact me about how to find other Christians who keep the Sabbath holy. You may find it a better way to worship God for your walk with Christ.

This is Brother Kenny, hoping you will join me next Sabbath to learn about the Fall Feast and the four Holy Sabbath days of the LORD yet to come. May God be gracious to you until then.