

“THE LAW” AND THE ISSUE OF THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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1. “The **law and the prophets** were until John. Since then the Kingdom of God has been preached, *Mat 4:17,23*, and everyone is pressing into it,” *Lk 16:16*. Now, we are under a **new jurisdiction of the kingdom of God**, the King who is Jesus, the Realm of His Kingdom, and the law of His Kingdom, *Mat 5,6,7*. We are now under law to Christ, *1Cor 9:21*. Christ’s law is the law of the Kingdom of God, *Gal 6:2*.
2. We are to keep the commandments of Christ, *Jn 14:15,21,23, Jn 15:10,12,14,17, Jn 13:34,35*. The No 1 command of Christ, that sums up all His commands, is **to love one another** as He has loved us, *Jn 15:12, Jn 13:34,35*.
3. As we love one another by doing good, we **fulfil all the law of God**, *Rom 13:8,10, Gal 5:14*.
4. In *Mat 22:36-40*, Jesus declares the **two great commands of God**, and then says, “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” *Deut 6:5, 10:12, 30:6, Lev 19:18*. The “Ten Commandments” hang on these two great commandments, *Mat 22:40*.
5. In *Mat 5:17*, Jesus said, “**I did not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfil.**” In *v18*, he said, “**Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all be fulfilled.**”
6. In *Mat 5:21-48*, Jesus then takes some commandments and gives them a **much fuller** meaning and application:
 - a. from the Decalogue (the “Ten commandments”), No 6 – *v21-26*
 - b. from the Decalogue, No 7 – *v27-30*
 - c. from *Deut 24:1f*, re divorce – *v31,32*
 - d. from *Lev 5:4, 6:3,5, 19:12, Deut 10:20*, re swearing oaths, *v33-37*
 - e. from *Ex 21:24, Lev 24:20, Deut 19:21*, re repayment of a wrong *v38-42*
 - f. from *Lev 19:8, Deut 23:3-6*, re loving your neighbour and hating enemies, *v43-48*These, (a,b,c,d,e,f), all show that acting in love fulfils all the law from God. These examples are spread over the whole 613 laws of the law of Moses, not just the Decalogue. He completes **the fulness of showing love** in each one.

Notice how Jesus takes authority over the statements of the Decalogue and the Old Testament laws, *Mat 5:22,28,32,34,39,44*, and gives a much fuller meaning. This is the God who spoke on Sinai, speaking about His own laws and explaining them in terms of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is clearly taking the place as the **Administrator and Lawmaker of the Kingdom of God** on earth. This is the “law of Christ”, *1Cor 9:21, Gal 6:2*.
7. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us as we **walk according to the Spirit**, *Rom 8:4*.
8. *Mat 5:19* says, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Following *v17,18*, which includes all the 613 commands of the law, if in *v19* “commandments” refers to the law’s commands it must mean all 613 of them, and not just the Decalogue. Now the teaching of the New Testament is totally against this. The teaching of the New Testament is totally against our having to keep all the commands of the law to please God and be right with Him. *Ac 15:1,2,5-29, Rom 3:21-31, Rom 4:13-17, Rom 10:1-10, Rom 14:5-13, Gal 2:16-21, Gal 3:1-14,15-29, Gal 4:1-31, Gal 5:1-14, Eph 2:14-16, Col 2:14,16,17.* This includes the issue of the Sabbath as is mentioned in *Rom 14:4-6, Gal 4:10,11, Eph 2:15, Col 2:16,17.*

9. In **Mat 5,6,7**, Jesus is stating His laws of the Kingdom of God, and says in conclusion, *Mat 7:24*, “**Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended,.....**”
10. **Therefore in Mat 5:19, the word “commandments” must refer to the commandments that Jesus is giving in Mat 5,6,7, not to the 613 commands of the law of Moses, which will be fulfilled as we walk in obedience to Jesus’ commandments.**
11. **Let us remember that Jesus is God, Jehovah come in the flesh, Jn 8:58, and His words in Mat 5,6,7, carry as much weight as those spoken on Mount Sinai, Jn 15:10,12,14,17.**
12. The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, but now Christ has come, **we are no longer under the schoolmaster**, *Rom 3:21,28, Rom 7:4,6, Gal 3:24,25.*
13. Take note that nowhere in the New Testament is there mention that we are required to keep the Sabbath of the 7th day, as established in *Ex 20:8-11, Ex 31:13-17*. In fact it says the very opposite. *Rom 14:4-6, Gal 4:10,11, Eph 2:15, Col 2:16,17.* *Ex 31:13* says that the Sabbath is a sign to Israel that they might know, “That I am the **LORD** who sanctifies you.” In *v17* God says, “It is a **sign** between Me and the children of Israel forever.” No 126 Pastors’ Notes.
14. The **fulfilment of the Sabbath** of the Law, in Christ, is expressed in *Heb 4:1-16, Mat 11:28-30.*

God has given to us a promise, *Heb 4:1*, of entering **His rest**, and it is required of us that we do. We are to enter His rest by faith, *v2,3*. **This rest is the same as that spoken of in Gen 2:2, when God rested after His 6 days of creation, Heb 4:4. This rest of God is the keeping of a Sabbath, v9.** (The Greek for “rest” in *v9* is **sabbatismos** which means the keeping of a Sabbath.) In practical terms it is abiding in Christ where we have ceased from our own works as God did from His, *v10*. This is Christ living His life in and through us, *Gal 2:20*.

Our conclusion is that the **fulfilment of the Sabbath in the New Testament is our spiritual relationship to Christ** not a specific day of the week.

15. In **Rev 1:10**, it says that John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, which most commentators agree is the Day on which Christ rose from the dead, that is the first day of the week, *Mat 28:1-10*, or the day after the Sabbath. It is also the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in *Ac 2:1-4*, that is the Day of Pentecost, *Lev 23:5-16*, which was 50 days after the 7th Sabbath, *v16*.

In **Ac 20:7**, it mentions that the disciples gathered to break bread on the first day of the week. In **1Cor 16:2**, Paul instructs the believers to lay aside money for the saints on the first day of

the week. **These scriptures indicate that the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, was the day on which the New Testament saints gathered to worship the Lord.**

16. Christ has set aside the requirement of the 4th command to keep the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. The fulfilment of the righteousness of the 4th commandment is found in our rest in Christ Himself. Here we have ceased from our own works and Christ is living His life in us and through us as we walk by faith in His Spirit, *Mat 11:28-30, Heb 4:1-11*.
17. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is also Lord of the Sabbath, *Mk 2:27,28*. This is why Jesus permitted the disciples to do things on the Sabbath that Moses forbade, *Mk 2:23,24, Ex 16:29,30*. Moses stoned a man to death for collecting sticks on the Sabbath, *Num 15:32-27*, whereas Jesus healed a lame man and told him to, "Rise take up your bed and walk," *Jn 5:8*.
18. The Scripture is quite clear that we are free to regard a particular day as holy to the Lord, or to regard every day as equal in the Lord, *Rom 14:5-13*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind, *Rom 14:5*. Neither are we to judge one another on such issues, *Rom 14:4,10,13*. The seventh day keepers are not to judge the first day keepers and the first day keepers are not to judge the seventh day keepers.
19. Concerning *Col 2:16*, some have said that "Sabbaths" in this verse refer to ceremonial Sabbaths not to the weekly Sabbath. However *Col 2:16* refers to "festivals," such as Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, (No 40 Pastors' Notes), which are annual events, "a new moon" which is a monthly event, and to "Sabbaths." By referring to *2Chr 8:13, Num 28:3,9,11,16,26, 29:1, 1Chr 23:31, 2Chr 2:4, 2Chr 3:13, Hos 2:11, Ezk 45:17, Neh 10:33*, we see the pattern of annual, monthly, and weekly as it must also be in *Col 2:16*. Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture.