

# **SABBATH EXCUSES EXAMINED AND ANSWERED – PART 3**

**People claim that the Sabbath was a shadow and part of the Old Covenant Jewish Ceremonial laws, and then believe that it was nailed to the cross when Christ died (see Colossians 2:14-17). They then positively declare that Sunday took the place of the original Sabbath in this New Covenant period.**

But the seventh day Sabbath was given to God's people at creation. This means that the Sabbath was in existence before sin entered the world, and thus before the sacrificial and ceremonial laws were instituted. Therefore the weekly Sabbath of God could not be part of the ceremonial laws, and so could not have been nailed to the cross along with these temporary laws.

Since many have trouble differentiating between the ceremonial laws written by Moses (Exodus 24:4, 34:27, 32; Leviticus 10:11, 26:46; Deuteronomy 31:9; Joshua 8:31; 2 Chronicles 23:18), and the Moral Law of 10 commandments spoken and written by God (Exodus 20:1-17, 24:12, 31:18, 34:1), then let us examine the clear differences between the two.

The ceremonial law is termed “the law of a carnal commandment” (Hebrews 7:16); and the moral Law of God, it is affirmed, “We know that the law is spiritual” (Romans 7:14). The one is a law of which “there was made of necessity a change” (Hebrews 7:12). The moral is that Law of which Christ says, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18).

The ceremonial law was a “shadow of good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1), and was only imposed “until the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:10). But the other was a moral code, of which it is said by John, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The one is a yoke not able to be borne (see Acts 15:10); while the other is that “law of liberty” by which we shall be judged (see James 2:8-12).

The ceremonial is that law which Christ “abolished in His flesh” (see Ephesians 2:15); while the moral is that Law which He did not come to destroy (see Matthew 5:17). The one is termed “the handwriting of ordinances” “which was contrary to us,” which was nailed to the cross and taken out of the way by the death of Christ (see Colossians 2:14); while the other is that Law which He came to magnify and make honorable (see Isaiah 42:21) and which James affirms is “the royal law” which is a sin to transgress (see James 2:8-12). The one was a temporary law which was disannulled “for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (see Hebrews 7:18); while the other is an eternal unchanging Law which cannot be made void: “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31).

The ceremonial law is that law which was the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles (see Ephesians 2:14); while the other is that Law, the work of which even the Gentiles are said to have written in their hearts (see Romans 2:14-15). The one is the law of commandments contained in ordinances (see Ephesians 2:15); while the moral Law is the commandments of God, which it is the duty of all mankind to keep (see Ecclesiastes 12:13).

This great moral Law of 10 commandments is brought to view by the message of the third angel (see Revelation 14:9-12). This is the Law which the remnant of the seed of the woman were keeping in the last days when the dragon made war upon them (see Revelation 12:17). This moral Law will insure, to all those who keep them, the right to enter into heaven and to eat of the tree of life (see Revelation 22:14).

Surely, these two laws should not be confounded. The moral Law was magnified, made honorable, established, is holy, just, spiritual, good, and royal; while the other was carnal, shadowy, burdensome, was abolished, broken down, taken out of the way, nailed to the cross, changed, and disannulled on account of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

It is true that the precepts of the moral Law are variously interspersed throughout the books of Moses and mingled with the precepts of the ceremonial law. But this can in no way cause them to be included as part of this ceremonial law and also done away with. The moral Law is as eternal as God, while the ceremonial law was only in force until Christ died on the cross. Those who rightly divide the word of truth will never confound these essentially different laws, nor will they apply to God's royal Law the language employed respecting the handwriting of ordinances.

The Ten Commandments are a perfect code of themselves, and this is proven by the following facts: God spoke them with His own voice; and it is said, "he added no more" (see Deuteronomy 5:22), thus showing that He had given a complete Law. He only wrote ten commandments and no more upon two tables of stone with His own finger, another proof that this was a complete moral code (see Deuteronomy 9:9-11). He caused these 10 laws alone to be placed under the mercy seat in the second apartment of the sanctuary (see Exodus 30:6; Hebrews 9:4-5), an evident proof that this was the Law that made an atonement necessary because it had been broken. And God expressly calls what He thus wrote on the tables of stone, a Law and commandments (see Exodus 24:12).

Both laws had Sabbaths, yet there were clear differences between them. The seventh day Sabbath originated in Eden before sin as part of God's immutable Law, and always occurred on the seventh day which we today call Saturday. While the feast day sabbaths originated after sin as part of the ceremonial law, and could take place on any day of the week. The seventh day Sabbath was written on stone by God's own finger. While the feast day sabbaths were written on cloth, or paper, or skin, by Moses' finger. The seventh day Sabbath, along with the 9 other commandments, was placed in the ark directly underneath the mercy seat with God's glory and presence above (see Exodus 30:6, 40:20,34), signifying that they were to be enforced permanently and were unchanging. While the feast day sabbaths were placed in the side of the ark (see Deuteronomy 31:26), signifying that they were to be enforced only temporarily until their purpose was accomplished. On the seventh day Sabbath no cooking was to be done, but all food was to be prepared and cooked on the sixth day or the preparation day (see Exodus 16:23). While on the feast day sabbaths you could prepare and cook your food (see Exodus 12:14-16). And on the seventh day Sabbath, no work could be done – not even sticks were to be gathered for the preparation of food (see Numbers 15:32-36). While on the feast day sabbaths work could be done in gathering various tree branches (during the feasts of tabernacles) in order to build booths for shelters (see Leviticus 23:34-40).

So there is a clear difference between God's unchanging fourth commandment of the moral Law to keep holy the seventh day Sabbath, and the temporary types and shadowy feast day sabbaths of the ceremonial law. The seventh day Sabbath was "made for man" before he had fallen in sin; hence it could not be a type or shadow pointing forward to Christ's death and, hence, could not have been nailed to the cross, but continues pointing backward to the beginning of this earth's history and to the Creator of us all. But the feast day sabbaths, as well as all the other types of the Jewish economy, came into existence after man had fallen and needed a Saviour; hence they were a shadow pointing forward to redemption and were indeed nailed to the cross (see Colossians 2:14).

Paul even states that God's people are to continue keeping the Sabbath of the moral Law after Christ's death, but nowhere does he state that we need to keep the sabbaths of the ceremonial law! (see Hebrews 4:4-11).

It should be plain to all who wish to see that the doing away with the handwriting of ordinances of the ceremonial law leaves in full force every precept of the royal Law, and also that the law of shadows pointing forward to the death of Christ expired when that event occurred. The breaking of the moral Law was that which caused the Saviour to lay down His life to save you and me from sin. Thus the continued and unchanging sacredness of the 10 commandments, including the fourth commandment of the seventh day Sabbath, may be judged by the fact that God gave His only Son to take its curse upon Himself and to die for our breaking of it.

But where did this teaching and belief that the seventh day Sabbath or Saturday was a shadow and part of the Jewish ceremonial laws and thus nailed to the cross and done away with at Christ's death first originate from? It is definitely not a modern belief, but it goes back more than 1800 years!

### **Tertullian (about 198 A.D.)**

“It follows, accordingly, that, in so far as the abolition of carnal circumcision and of the old law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specific times, so also the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary.” Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, Chapter IV - Of the Observance of the Sabbath, from *Early Church Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.iv.ix.iv.html>, accessed 2-5-13.

### **Origin (about 226 A.D.)**

“Thus was he (John the Baptist) born to make ready for the Lord a people fit for Him, at the end of the Covenant now grown old, which is the end of the Sabbatic period. Hence it is not possible that the rest after the Sabbath [was now ended] should have come into existence from the seventh of our God; on the contrary, it is our Saviour who, after the pattern of His own rest, caused us to be made in the likeness of His death, and hence also of His resurrection.” Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Book II, #27, from *Early Church Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. X, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf09.xv.iii.ii.xxvii.html>, accessed 2-5-13.

### **St. Jerome (393 A.D.)**

“For they who were still weak in faith and thought some meats clean, some unclean: and supposed there was a difference between one day and another, for example, that the Sabbath, and the New Moons, and the Feast of Tabernacles were holier than other days, were commanded to eat herbs which are indifferently partaken of by all. But such as were of stronger faith believed all meats and all days to be alike.” St. Jerome, *The Letters of St. Jerome, Against Jovinianus*, Book II, from *Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II*, Vol. VI, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf206.vi.vi.II.html>, accessed 2-5-13.

### **St. John Chrysostom (about 403 A.D.)**

“Was the Law then of no use? It was indeed of use; and of great use: but to make men perfect it was of no use. For in this respect he says, "The Law made nothing perfect." All were figures, all shadows; circumcision, sacrifice, sabbath. Therefore they could not reach through the soul, wherefore they pass away and gradually withdraw. "But the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God."” St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Homily XIII, #4, from *Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I*, Vol. XIV, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf14.v.xvii.html>, accessed 2-5-13.

### **St. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (about 415 A.D.)**

“Now the promises of the Old Testament are earthly; and yet (with the exception of the sacramental ordinances which were the shadow of things to come, such as circumcision, the Sabbath and other observances of days, and the ceremonies of certain meats, and the complicated ritual of sacrifices and sacred things which suited "the oldness" of the carnal law and its slavish yoke) it contains such precepts of righteousness as we are even now taught to observe, which were especially expressly drawn out on the two tables without figure or shadow: for instance, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt do no murder," "Thou shalt not covet," "and whatsoever other commandment is briefly comprehended in the saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."” St. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, On the Spirit and the Letter In One Book, Addressed to Marcellinus, Chapter 36, from Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. V, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf105.xi.xxxix.html>, accessed 2-5-13.

### **Pope St. Gregory I (The Great) (603 A.D.)**

“But after that the grace of Almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ has appeared, the commandments of the law which were spoken figuratively cannot be kept according to the letter. For, if any one says that this about the Sabbath is to be kept, he must needs say that carnal sacrifices are to be offered...” Pope St. Gregory I (The Great), Epistle I - To the Roman Citizens, In the Sixth Indiction, and the Thirteenth Year From His Ordination, from Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. XIII, Book XIII, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf213.ii.ix.i.html>, accessed 2-5-13.

### **Council of Trent (1566)**

“With regard to the exposition of this commandment (Sabbath commandment), the faithful are to be carefully taught in what it accords with, and in what it differs from the others, in order that they may understand why Christians observe not the Sabbath, but the Lord’s day. The point of difference is evident: the other commandments of the Decalogue are precepts of the natural law, obligatory at all times and unalterable, and hence, after the abrogation of the Law of Moses, all the Commandments contained in the two tables are observed by Christians, not however because their observance is commanded by Moses, but because they are in accord with the law of nature and are enforced by its dictate: whereas this commandment, if considered as to the time of its fulfillment, is not fixed and unalterable, but is susceptible of change, and belongs not to the moral, but the ceremonial law....the obligation was to cease with the abrogation of Jewish worship, of which it formed a part; and it therefore was no longer obligatory after the death of Christ....these ceremonies were to disappear at the coming of that light and truth, which is Christ Jesus. Hence St. Paul...[writes these] sentiments which are also to be found in his Epistle to the Colossians [Col. 2:16].” The Catechism of the Council of Trent: Published by Command of Pope Pius the Fifth of the Roman Catholic Church, July 1566, Part III - On the Decalogue, On the Third Commandment, p 264, Translated into English by professor J. Donovan, Published by Fielding Lucas, Jr, Baltimore, MD, 1829 (somewhat different worded version at <http://www.catholicapologetics.info/thechurch/catechism/TenCommandments-third.shtml>, accessed 2-5-13).

### **Catholic Church today**

“Those who lived according to the old order of things have come to a new hope, no longer keeping the Sabbath, but the Lord's Day, in which our life is blessed by him and by his death.”  
Universal Catholic Catechism: Article 3 – The Third Commandment, #2 - The Lord's Day, #2175, at <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/comm2.html>, accessed 2-5-13.

So you can clearly see, that the teaching of the seventh day Sabbath was a shadow and connected with the Jewish ceremonial laws of the old covenant and therefore ceased to be kept once Christ had died, is not a modern belief at all, but it has been around since the second century A.D. You can also plainly see that this belief is not found written in the Bible at all, but was first found originating in the writings of Catholic church fathers. Thus this belief is not a doctrine of God taught in the Bible, but is purely Catholic in origin and a doctrine taught in the Roman Catholic Church.

This then means that for any Protestant or non-Catholic believer to use the argument that the seventh day Sabbath of the Lord was a shadow and no longer needs to be kept because it passed away at Christ's death, in their efforts to try and prove that Sunday is God's holy Sabbath day today, is forced to rely upon the teachings of Catholicism and not the truth of God's holy Scriptures in order to do so!

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