

SABBATH EXCUSES EXAMINED AND ANSWERED – PART 5

People declare that we are to find our rest in Jesus. They then claim that since Jesus declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath (see Matthew 12:8, 11:28-30), then the seventh day of the week is no longer to be kept holy, because Jesus has now become our Sabbath Rest.

While it is true that all people are to find rest in Jesus (resting from all their cares, burdens, anxieties, sins, etc.), and while it is also true that Jesus declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath day, yet it is not correct to therefore conclude that Jesus is the Sabbath day Himself!

The Queen of England is not England herself, but only the sovereign over it. In like manner, Jesus is not the Sabbath day Himself, but only the Sovereign or Lord over it. So as we find our rest in Jesus, we must not neglect to also rest from our labors upon His weekly Sabbath day. And since Jesus is still today the Lord of all His followers, then there is still a Sabbath day which He is Lord of and which all of His followers are to be observing today! And what day of the week is this Sabbath day of God in this New Covenant period?

“For he (God) spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works....There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Hebrews 4:4, 9-11.

Now this word “rest” in the Greek passage “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” is “sabbatismos”, and it literally translates and means “Sabbath keeping” (see Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, Greek word #4520). So Paul was saying that there remaineth therefore a rest or a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God.

So we can clearly see that Paul declares that there is indeed a Sabbath day which all of God's followers are to rest upon and observe in this New Covenant period, and this day of the week is the same day which God rested upon and made holy at creation – the seventh day or Saturday! Then let us heed Paul's counsel and avoid falling from God's grace because of unbelief by not keeping His Sabbath day of rest!

But where did this particular idea come from – that we no longer need to keep holy the seventh-day of each week as the Sabbath of God because Jesus Christ Himself, as Lord of the Sabbath day, has now become our Sabbath Rest?

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 [which has 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. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (about 400 A.D.)

“The rest of the Sabbath we consider no longer binding as an observance, now that the hope of our eternal rest has been revealed. But it is a very useful thing to read of, and to reflect on. “ St. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Augustine-Anti-Manichaeon Writings, Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon, Book VI, #4, in Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. IV, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.iv.ix.viii.html>, accessed 2-19-13.

“So, when you ask why a Christian does not keep the Sabbath, if Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, my reply is, that a Christian does not keep the Sabbath precisely because what was prefigured in the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ. For we have our Sabbath in Him who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."” St. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Augustine-Anti-Manichaeon Writings, Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon, Book XIX, #9, in Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. IV, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.iv.ix.xxi.html>, accessed 2-19-13.

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

“We therefore accept spiritually, and hold spiritually, this which is written about the Sabbath. For the Sabbath means rest. But we have the true Sabbath in our Redeemer Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.” 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.

So you can clearly see, that the teaching and belief that God’s followers do not need to keep holy only the seventh day of every week as a holy Sabbath of God because Jesus is now our Sabbath rest, is not a modern belief at all, but it has been around since the third 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.

This then means that for any Protestant or non-Catholic believer to use the argument that Jesus is our Sabbath rest and therefore we do not need to keep holy every Saturday as God’s Sabbath, in their efforts to try and prove that Saturday is not God’s holy Sabbath day today, are 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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