LESSON 2: THE SABBATH

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2.1 Which day is the true Sabbath?

This is one of the longest running debates about any Bible teaching. Theologians and ministers of every background and theology have offered their opinion about the "Saturday vs Sunday" question.

The term "Sabbath" has it origin from the Hebrew word *Shabbat* (Strong H7676), meaning day of rest/cease. The word "Sabbath" is found 135 times in the Bible; it is mentioned 75 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 60 times in the New (Renewed Covenant) Testament. This word always refers to the seventh day of the week. The basic purpose of this day is to rest and to spend time in fellowship with YHWH, His Congregation and with family.

For the last 1700 years the "church" followed a dogma that was conjured up during the second century – a man-made law created/bent by Constantine in the 3rd century. Man asserted that YHWH and/or the apostles changed the day of worship from the 7th day Sabbath to Sunday - the 1st day of the week.

That the seventh day Sabbath changed to a first day worship day is a historical fact, the greater question would be why? Nowhere in the Bible is there a distinct and clear reference to authorise this change. Was this a change in Yahweh's eternal plan for humanity or was it humanity intervening into HIS laws, changing it to suite a different group of people or their belief system?

2.2 The Sabbath and Creation

Going back to the earliest references in the Bible to the Sabbath, we find that the Sabbath commemorates YHWH's rest or cessation from His creative work and declared Holy by YHWH Himself.(Gen 2:2-3)

The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and forever since! This 4th Commandment begins with "remember", indicating that it existed when YHWH wrote the 10 Words on the stone tablets at Sinai.

This commandment has always been the “test” commandment. By keeping it, a person is visibly different and set-apart from society around as well as seen as peculiar!

2.3 The Sabbath is Everlasting and a Commandment from Yahweh

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between ME (GOD) and the children of Israel forever” (Ex 31:12-13).

The Scriptures are very clear that the Sabbath is a commanded and written by the Finger of Yahweh Himself (Ex 20:8-11; 31:18)

Yeshua and His disciples ……

- Yeshua and the disciples honoured the seventh day; Sabbath
- Yeshua often had problems with some of the traditions of the spiritual leaders regarding the Sabbath,
- Never with the Sabbath itself
- See : Luke 4:16; 23:56; Mark 1:21; Acts 13:13-14; 17:2; Acts 18:4

2.4 A History Overview

History shows that Sunday replacing Sabbath, is a tradition of man.

The Messianic community grew in the 1st Century AD – a 120 followers (Acts 1:15); 3000 followers (Acts 2:41); 5000 followers (Acts 4:4) and their numbers kept multiplying (Acts 6:7; 9:31). It is also known that the writers of the New Testament were Hebrews, and the apostles and early disciples were Hebrews. They worshipped on Shabbat (Sabbath), celebrated the feasts, and attended Synagogue.

The Roman wars against the Hebrews (Israel) not only destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem, but also resulted in anti-Semitisms of the Gentile Christians community. It

interpreted the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem as a sign that Yahweh had replaced Israel and started to develop their own “Christian theology”, in a setting free from Jerusalem's influence. Being “Messianic” and studying Torah became an antithesis (direct opposite) with being a “Christian”.

Later, Church Fathers (such as Ignatius and Marcion) advocated that the “church” abolish the relics (Torah/Law) of the Old Testament as well as “Jewish culture” and associate with the new religion “Christianity”

Eusebius wrote that the promises of the Hebrew Scriptures were for “Christians” and not “Jews”, and the curses were for the “Jews”. He argued that the Church was the continuation of the Old Testament and thus superseded “Judaism”. The “new” Church declared itself to be the true Israel and heir to the divine promises. It also discredited Israel to prove that Yahweh had cast away His people and transferred His love to “Christianity”.

In this, we find the beginnings of a Replacement Theology and became one of the main foundations on which Christian anti-Semitism was based, even to this day.

History records show that the Roman emperor, Constantine, was raised as a sun worshipper - Mithraism. He claimed to have converted to Christianity in 306 A.D. He became the first “Christian” Roman Emperor in 321 A.D., and decreed all business should cease on "the honoured day of the sun” – Sunday, changing the seventh day Sabbath to the first day Sunday worship by a decreed law, combining sun-worship and Christianity. Roman Catholicism was thus established.

2.5 O & A

- **Is keeping the Sabbath optional?**
  No, it is the 4th Commandment directly from the Finger of YHWH
- **Can I choose any day to be my Sabbath?**
  No, YHWH calls the 7th day Sabbath HIS HOLY DAY - meaning to be set-apart
- **Isn’t every day blessed?**
  No, only the 7th day was blessed and declared Holy by the Creator of All!
- **Is the keeping of Torah for our benefit?**

- Yes, according to Deur. 6:24; 5:33; 28; 1-14 there is an explicit blessing for those who keeps the commandments of YHWH
- **Did Sabbath observance cease with the NT?**
  No, according to the Word it is a perpetual (everlasting) sign and covenant
- **Did Yeshua come to destroy the Sabbath and the Torah?**
  No, Yeshua said in Matt 5:17-19 think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them,* the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (WOY)

2.6 Conclusion

- We should not follow church tradition by keeping Sunday as the Sabbath – nullifying the power of YHWH (Mark 7:13).
- Yeshua and all His disciples kept the Sabbath – Walk as HE walked.
- Sabbath is to be observed perpetually, it is everlasting.
- All true believers of Yeshua should keep the 7th day Sabbath.
- Sabbath is a Sign between YHWH and His People forever. (Ex 31:12-13).
- YHWH never changed the Sabbath to another day – HE is forever the same and cannot change His own Laws and Rulings.