

HAS GOD ABOLISHED THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH?

By Nick Bibile

Ro 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God

The majority of the Christian church believes, we are not under the law anymore; there fore we are not under the bondage of the law. God has delivered us to freedom in worship, because we are under grace now. We can worship the Lord any day and we want to. They use Romans 14:5-6 to justify this matter. They also use the following scriptures:

Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

I too used to believe and teach this view, until God in his mercy delivered me from the false doctrines of Arminianism. The majority of the modern church is wrong. I will show you first how this is not logical from the perspective of the scriptures, then show through facts the beliefs of the early church, and how the early theologians believed on this subject. Then also through scripture I will show the Arminians have twisted the scripture for their own reasons.

The Ariminian logic does not make any sense.

As an ex-Arminian I believed in the ten commandments, and also believed in the New Testament we see nine of the commandments that we need to obey but we do not see anywhere in the New Testament that we have to obey the fourth commandment, there fore the fourth commandment is abolished. Now that I have embraced the reformed doctrines, I see the Arminian view does not hold any water at all. Why? They believe the 10 Commandments. They believe it is our religious freedom to express our faith by prayer in public schools and have the 10 Commandments posted in courts, government offices and public schools. Why do we have to post 10 Commandments if they believe only nine commandments, why not say the nine Commandments, as the fourth commandment does not exist? As Christians, we need to think! Not just, believe another man's opinion. This is the fault of the church, today's churches are not thinking. We need to test everything that comes from the pulpit in the light of the scripture. Be like the Bereans do not just believe because the Pastor is a nice sincere friendly loving person.

Philip Schaff the great church historian who wrote volumes of church history said, **"It is incorporated in the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments], the moral law, which Christ did not come to destroy, but to fulfill, and which cannot be robbed of one commandment without injury to all the rest."** (Taken from the eight volume History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff; volume 1, pages 476-480.) Also he said, " Next to the Church and the Bible, the Lord's Day is the chief pillar of Christian society."

In reality, the Arminians have 9 Commandments and not the 10 Commandments.

Proof of scripture from the New Testament.

Mt 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Jesus did not say, "on these two commandments hangs all the law and the prophets except the fourth commandment."

In the following scriptures James shows that no one can keep the law, and he specifically points to the 10 Commandments. The 10 Commandments cannot save us. He shows that we are unable to fulfill all of the 10 Commandments.

Jas 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

Jas 2:9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

Jas 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Jas 2:11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

The above scriptures do not say that the fourth commandment is abolished or taken out. He speaks on verse ten of the whole law, the entire 10 commandments.

The early Church throughout history did not believe that the fourth commandment is abolished.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 101, says: "Let every one that loves Christ keep holy the Lord's day--, the queen of days, the resurrection day, the highest of all days."

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, who wrote in the second century, says: "Both

custom and reason challenge from us that we should honor the Lord's day, seeing on that day it was that our Lord Jesus completed his resurrection from the dead."

Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons, who also lived in the second century, and who was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a companion of St. John, speaks of the Lord's Day as the Christian sabbath. "On the Lord's day," said he, "every one of us Christians keep the sabbath."

Clement of Alexandria, of the same century, testifies: "A Christian, according to the command of the gospel, observes the Lord's day, thereby glorifying the resurrection of the Lord."

Tertullian, of the same period, says: "The Lord's day is the holy day of the Christian church."

Justin Martyr, who died about A.D. 160, says that the Christians "neither celebrated the Jewish festivals, nor observed their sabbaths, nor practiced circumcision." (Dialogue with Trypho, p. 34). In another place, he says, "they, both those who lived in the city and those who lived in the country, were all accustomed to meet on the day which is denominated Sunday, for the reading of the Scriptures, prayer, exhortation and communion assembly met on Sunday, because this is the first day on which God, having changed the darkness and the elements, created the world; and because Jesus our Lord on this day rose from the dead."

The early Protestant theologians and the leaders of the Church believed that the fourth commandment is not abolished.

"Thus we see how the things that are ordained here concerning the Sabbath day are now fulfilled, at least with respect to the truth of the figure that the fathers had only as a shadow. In fact, what was commanded about the day of rest must also apply to us as well as to them. For we must take God's law as it is and thus have an everlasting rule of righteousness. For it is certain that in the Ten Commandments God intended to give a rule that should endure forever. Therefore, let us not think that the things which Moses says about the Sabbath day are unnecessary for us not because the figure remains in force, but because we have the truth represented by the figure." (John Calvin)

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"Have a special care to sanctify the Lord's Day; for as thou keepest it, so it will be with thee all the weeklong. Make the Lord's day the market for thy soul; let the whole day be spent in prayer, repetitions, or meditations; lay aside the affairs of the other part of the week; let thy sermon thou hast heard be converted into prayer. Shall God allow thee six days, and wilt thou not afford him one? In the church be careful to serve God, for thou art in his eyes, and not in man's." (John Bunyan)

"The thing I would have you now observe is, that the commandment of keeping the Sabbath was not abrogated with the ceremonial law, but is purely moral, and the observation of it is to be continued to the end of the world." Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

" It is a strong argument in favour of this conclusion, that the law of the Sabbath was taken up and incorporated in the new dispensation by the Apostles, the infallible founders of the Christian Church. All the Mosaic laws founded on the permanent relations of men either to God or to their fellows, are in like manner adopted in the Christian Code. They are adopted, however, only as to their essential elements." Charles Hodge (1797-1878)

The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days (Lev. 23:3), and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship (Ps. 92:1-2; Isa. 58:13-14), except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy (Matt. 12:11-12). (Charles Spurgeon)

"The lasting nature or perpetuity of this twofold Commandment is further evidenced by the fact that in the above reason given for its enforcement there was nothing which was peculiarly pertinent to the nation of Israel, but instead, that which speaks with clarion voice to the whole human race. Moreover, this statute was given a place not in the ceremonial law of Israel, which was to be done away when Christ fulfilled its types, but in the Moral Law, which was written by the finger of God Himself upon tables of stone, to signify to us its permanent nature." (A.W. Pink)

Then what does the scripture say on Romans 14:5-6 and Colossians 2:16?

Basically, there were two ethnic groups in the church. The Christian Jews and the Gentiles. The Jewish believers tried to impose the Jewish ceremonial laws into the church. Romans chapter 14, the context is the same. As we saw in our previous lesson, how the Jewish believers did not eat meat with the Gentile believers, as they could have been unclean according to the Jewish law. Animals that were consecrated to the idols were forbidden to eat. Animals that were died in disease or killed by other animals were prohibited to eat. Then there were many various other restrictions. In the same context when we come to verse five and six, we see the Jewish believers wanted to impose certain Jewish holy days. The Passover, the Jews observed the feast of tabernacles, the Pentecost and the seventh day Sabbath. Again, they failed to realize these ceremonial laws were abolished in Christ Jesus on the cross. The Jewish Christians still observed the Seventh Day Sabbath, while the Gentile Christians were observing the first day of the week in honor of Christ's resurrection.

Let us also see the context in Colossians chapter two on this subject. The Arminians would take verse 17, and say, "look the Sabbath day worship does not

count anymore, so let us go to church and do what ever we want to.” There are major problems as the Arminians fails to distinguish between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sabbath and they fail to observe the Christian Sabbath saying it no longer valid. They throw the baby with the bathwater. Look at the new commentaries they are all Arminians and then compare the commentaries to Matthew Henry, John Gill, John Calvin and older commentators there is a vast difference. We need to put the scripture in context. The Arminians speak a lot on context but they are the ones violating the context.

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Verse 14, blotting out means in Greek cancelled, rub off, wipe off or erase. Now think carefully, what was cancelled? That which was contrary to us, against us. This law was against the Jews. And this is not the moral law but the ceremonial law.

Eph 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Beloved, let me ask this question, how can the Jew and the Gentile, the two can become one? By abolishing the ceremonial law. The enmity between the Jew and the Gentile was the middle wall of partition. That middle wall was broken by Christ on the cross, now the two are reconciled together and in Christ, there is peace.

Now in Colossians verse 16, Paul is making a plea fro freedom as the ceremonial laws are abolished let us not pass judgments in these matters. The seventh day Sabbath worship with all the outward ceremonial laws is no longer to be practiced.

These were just shadows, but the substance is of Christ, and the substance remains. The substance of the Sabbath, the Lord of the Sabbath is still alive, and the substance the worship of the Lord is changed to the Lord's Day and the substance of worship was never abolished.

Let us see Galatians 4:9-10.

Ga 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Now Paul is speaking to the Gentile Christians here. They came to know God through faith in Christ. The Gentile Christians were drawn into the spider web of Judaizers saying that you need to observe the seventh day of Sabbath and all the other days of the Old Testament. Then Paul objected the Gentiles as they took them as a means of salvation.

Romans 14:5-6 Paul is not opposing on the Christian Sabbath, and he is speaking on the Jewish holy days of worship, and as for the Gentiles every day is acceptable to the Lord.

Application.

There are six days given to us that we are engaged at work and different activities, we cannot fully worship the Lord and concentrate on him when worldly things surround our mind. God is holy, his word is holy and the service to God is holy and the worship is holy. God has separated the holy from the world and given us a day to feast upon him. So, we will not be engaged in common things. It is a separation between the common and the holy.

The ceremonial part of the Sabbath is abolished; the Old Testament prophets spoke much about the moral aspect of the Sabbath, as the Jews defiled the Sabbath day according to the customs of the world.

Isa 58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

Has the Sabbath day become a worldly pleasure for you? Just spent two hours in the church, then spend the balance for pleasure. Is it a day to go to the malls, to buy things on sale? Going to the movies, watching football games, and the basketball? Is it a day to work on your car, your house? Jonathan Edward's said, "First day of the week should be distinguished in the Christian church from other days of the week, as a Sabbath, to be devoted to religious exercises."

Let me close with a quotation from Jonathan Edwards.

"How little regard have you had to the Scriptures, to the Word preached, to sabbaths, and sacraments! How profanely have you talked, many of you, about those things that are holy! After what manner have many of you kept God's holy

day, not regarding the holiness of the time, nor caring what you thought of in it! Yea, you have not only spent the time in worldly, vain, and unprofitable thoughts, but immoral thoughts: pleasing yourself with the reflection on past acts of wickedness, and in contriving new acts. Have not you spent much holy time in gratifying your lusts in your imaginations, yea, not only holy time, but the very time of God's public worship, when you have appeared in God's more immediate presence? How have you not only not attended to the worship, but have in the mean time been feasting your lusts, and wallowing yourself in abominable uncleanness! How many sabbaths have you spent, one after another, in a most wretched manner! Some of you not only in worldly and wicked thoughts, but also a very wicked outward behavior! When you on sabbath-days have got along with your wicked companions, how has holy time been treated among you! What kind of conversation has there been! Yea, how have some of you, by a very indecent carriage, openly dishonored and cast contempt on the sacred services of God's house, and holy day! And what you have done some of you alone, what wicked practices there have been in secret, even in holy time, God and your own consciences know."

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