

A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU

compiled by Rachel M. Cory, December 25, 2007

EZEKIEL 20:20 “Hallow My Sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.”

Our God is not arbitrary. He does not make up useless rules. Every command is for our best good. And this is very, very true of the Sabbath commandment.

THE SABBATH ANSWERS MAN'S DEEPEST QUESTIONS.

1. WHERE DID I COME FROM?

GENESIS 2:2,3 “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.”

“And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all His work which God created and made.”

To sanctify means “to set apart for a special purpose,” “to make holy,” or “to consecrate.” In the very beginning, God sanctified the Sabbath. It was not Adam's seventh day. Adam had not yet been alive for 24 hours. The first gift of God to mankind was this special time. Even before God warned them against the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, He set aside the Sabbath hours. Hours to spend in holy communion and contemplation.

Did you ever wonder why God took six days to create the earth, and then took one day just to celebrate. Who was watching? Remember that God's authority and His right to rule had just been challenged by Lucifer, the highest created being. Could it be that God was saying something about His authority as creator? Perhaps the angels who rebelled had been tempted to forget that they were created beings.

EXODUS 20:11 “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Right in the middle of the Ten Commandments, God inscribed the Sabbath, in stone, an eternal symbol of His relationship to us. We are His creation.

2. WHERE AM I GOING?

ISAIAH 66:22-23 “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, says the Lord, so shall your descendants and your name remain.

And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord.”

In the new earth, “all flesh,” not just all Jews, will come together to worship God each Sabbath. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man” (MARK 2:27).

3. WHY IS THE WORLD IN SUCH A MESS?

DEUTERONOMY 5:15 “Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”

We have all been caught up in slavery to sin, and God has offered to bring us out by the miracle of His grace and power. Someday we will literally leave this old Egypt of sin and cross over into the promised Canaan. In the meantime Satan is Pharaoh. Disease, death and confusion are all around us. We cannot expect this to get better, only worse, as time grows shorter. But we can have peace in our own hearts knowing that God is with us, and will bring us home. The Sabbath is God's reminder of His promised deliverance.

4. HOW CAN I GET TO THIS NEW EARTH?

EZEKIEL 20:12 “Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them.”

EXODUS 31:13 “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout all our generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.”

Just as the Sabbath was sanctified or set apart for a holy purpose, so we are set apart for God's purpose. It is only by the regenerating power of God, that our hearts are changed and we are consecrated to be used by Him. Only those who are changed in this way will see the new earth. The God who created man in the beginning will create him anew - redeemed and resurrected from the dead. God will make him a fit subject for His kingdom.

5. WHO MADE ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE?

Jesus Christ rested from all His labors on the Sabbath day when He slept in Joseph's tomb (MATTHEW 28:1, MARK 16:1-2, MARK 16:9, LUKE 24:1, JOHN 20:1).

6. HOW LONG WILL THIS SIN PROBLEM LAST?

We have almost reached 6000 years since Adam sinned. The millennium, 1000 years during which the earth will rest, represents a Sabbath for this earth (REVELATION 20:2,4). The Sabbath is a continual prophecy of how long it will take to finish the rebellion and restore peace to the universe.

Our Heavenly Father knew that without a time set apart for communion and worship, we would loose our connection with Him. We would forget who we are, and where we are going. How clearly this has been demonstrated over the ages.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

1. THE SABBATH IS JUST FOR THE JEWS. IT WAS INTRODUCED AT SINAI AS A MEMORIAL OF THEIR RESCUE FROM EGYPT.

The 7th day was “blessed” and “hallowed” at the end of creation week, when only Adam and Eve were living. Can you show me, in the Scriptures, where the LORD unblessed or unhallowed the 7th day.

- A. PSALM 105:43-45 says that God brought Israel out of Egypt so that they could keep His statutes. They could not keep the Sabbath in Egypt, because they were forced to work.
- B. The Israelites knew about the Sabbath, before Sinai! Before Sinai, God gave them manna from heaven. They were not to gather this food on the Sabbath. (EXODUS 16:28).
- C. The stranger was included in the fourth commandment, not just the Jew (EXODUS 20:10). A blessing was to come upon “the son of the stranger” “that keeps the Sabbath” (ISAIAH 56:1-8).
- D. NEHEMIAH. 9:13-14 has been used by some to say that the Israelites had no knowledge of the Sabbath before Sinai. It says, “You made known to them Your holy Sabbath.”

Compare: “In the day when I chose Israel... and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt” (EZEKIEL 20:5). Are we to conclude from this verse that God was not known by anyone before that time. Of course not! The Israelites had just lost site of God and of His commandments.

- E. DEUTERONOMY 5:15 It is true that they were to keep the Sabbath as a memorial of their rescue from Egypt. But they were also commanded to deal rightly in weights and measures because “I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore shall you observe all my statutes and all my judgments, and do them:” (LEVITICUS 19:35-37). Are we to conclude that prior to their deliverance from Egypt, they might short-change their neighbors with impunity and that only Jews are required by God to refrain from cheating anyone?

LEVITICUS 11:45 “I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”

Is the command to “be holy” only for Jews? Does the command to be holy have meaning only in context of deliverance from Egypt. Or have we all been slaves of sin and of Satan?

2. “I WILL CAUSE ALL HER MIRTH TO CEASE, HER FEAST DAYS HER NEW MOONS, AND HER SABBATHS, AND ALL HER SOLEMN FEASTS” (HOSEA 2:11).

This verse is cited by some as a prophecy predicting the end of the seventh day Sabbath. The condition here described was fulfilled at the destruction of Israel by the Babylonians. The Jews were keeping the forms of their religion without heart penitence. They had even erected graven images of pagan gods in the Temple of God at Jerusalem. This was abhorrent to God (Isaiah 1:11-19). When God allowed Israel to be conquered and the Temple destroyed, the Jews could not celebrate their special ceremonial Sabbaths and feasts because they took place in connection with the Temple.

“Behold upon the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows, for the wicked one shall no more pass through you; he is utterly cut off” (Nahum 1:9). Christ is the One who “brings good tidings. The Sabbath was one of the “appointed feasts.” This puts Sabbath-keeping far into the new age, after Satan has been cut off.

3. DIDN'T JESUS CHANGE THE SABBATH TO SUNDAY?

- A. MATTHEW 5:17,18 Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

PSALM 111:7,8 “All His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.”

PSALM 89:34 “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”

MALACHI 3:6 “For I am the Lord, I change not.”

I CHRONICLES 17:27 “For You have blessed O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever.”

[Remember that people are blessed upon condition of obedience, but the Sabbath was blessed unconditionally. God did not say, “If it works out, then we'll keep it.”]

- B. HEBREWS 9:16 “For where a testament is, there must also be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives.”

GALATIANS 3:15 “Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant (will), yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.”

A man's last will and testament cannot be changed after his death.

After the death of Christ, nothing could be added to the “new covenant” or New Testament. That is why Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and baptism before His death. They are a memorial of His death and resurrection, and a symbol of our death to the old life, and resurrection to new life in Him. If the Commandments were to be changed, then Jesus would have to say this clearly, and officially before His death. Sunday keeping was instituted by men well after Christ's death.

Jesus expected His followers to be keeping the Sabbath at least 40 years after His death at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

MATTHEW 24:20 “But pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.”

He did not say this because it would be more difficult to get out of the city on that day, because it really would have been easier. The streets would be deserted because all the Jews would be in the synagogue. In fact when the time came, the Jews stayed in the city and the Christians were the only ones who fled and thereby saved their lives.

C. HEBREWS 10:9 “He taketh away the first that He may establish the second.”

Some have pointed to this verse as taking away the seventh day Sabbath. But read the words in context. Paul is speaking of the old covenant with its law of sacrifices, a human priesthood, and an earthly temple. This was replaced by the ministry of Christ our high priest in heaven (the true sanctuary), who ministers His own blood. No mention is made of a day of worship.

D. LUKE 4:16 “And He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.”

Some say that Jesus broke the fourth commandment, thereby setting us an example that it was not binding, when He healed on the Sabbath, or allowed his disciples to eat grain that they gathered while passing through a field on the Sabbath day (MATTHEW 12:10-12, JOHN 5:2-18).

Jesus said, “I have kept my Father's commandments” (JOHN 15:10). **If Jesus had truly broken the commandment, then He would have been a sinner, and could not have been our Savior.**

It is lawful to heal and do works of mercy on the Sabbath day, but not for money. The Jews who accused Jesus of breaking their traditions were wrong.

Ministers today, who do God's work on the Sabbath are blameless (I COR 10:1-4, NEHEMIAH. 9:9-14). Medical personnel who work to save lives on the Sabbath are also within the law.

But the farmer who wishes to harvest because the crop is ripe today or the weather is threatening is not within the law.” On the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earring time and in harvest time thou shalt rest” (EX. 34:21).

The religious leaders of Christ's day had added dozens of their own rules for keeping the Sabbath, until the day had lost all of it's original meaning. In fact it was a lot work just keeping all of the Sabbath regulations. There was no time to think about God, for thinking about whether one might be breaking some rule. Christ cleared away these traditions of men.

4. SINCE THE RESURRECTION WAS ON SUNDAY, WE KEEP THAT DAY IN HONOR OF HIM.

A. MATTHEW 12:8 Jesus said, “The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.”
Jesus' special day is the Sabbath.

B. John called it “the Lord's day” (Revelation 1:10). When John mentions Sunday in his gospel, written 64 years after the cross, he calls it simply “the first day of the week” (John 20:1). If Sunday had truly become the new Sabbath, would he not have mentioned it in some special way.?

C. God calls the Sabbath “My holy day” (ISA. 58:13). Remember that it was Jesus who spoke through Isaiah, and through all of the Old Testament prophets.

MATTHEW 15:6,9 “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.” “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

DEUTERONOMY 4:2 “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God...” (*Proverbs 30:6*).

5. DIDN'T JESUS ALWAYS APPEAR TO HIS DISCIPLES ON SUNDAY?

Christ appeared to His disciples over a period of forty days after His resurrection. Only five of these recorded appearances give a clue as to the day.

- A. Resurrection Sunday: To Mary Magdalene, to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, to eleven disciples in the upper room. (The eleven disciples were not holding a religious meeting. They were hiding in terror of the Jews.
- B. Eight days later on a Monday, because Thomas was finally with them (JOHN 20:26).
- C. To the disciples while they were out fishing (JOHN 21). No day is given.
- D. Ascension day - forty days after the resurrection - a Thursday (ACTS 1:3,9).
- E. MATTHEW 28:10-17 does not give a day.

6. WE CELEBRATE EASTER SUNDAY IN HONOR OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. DOESN'T THAT MAKE SUNDAY A SPECIAL DAY?

The "many thousands" of Jews who "believed" (Acts 21:20) did not view their acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as their expected Messiah as representing a breaking away from their Jewish religion and a joining to a new religion called Christianity. They simply viewed themselves as "believing Jews." They continued to act and to worship like Jews, including the observance of the "Jewish" festivals.

After the death of Christ, Passover was celebrated with bread and wine, rather than with a sacrificial lamb, as initiated by Christ at His last Passover meal. In fact there was much debate among early Christians regarding the proper observance - how long to fast, whether to celebrate the Lord's supper in the evening or the next morning, etc.

The actual introduction of Easter-Sunday appears to have occurred in Palestine after Emperor Hadrian ruthlessly crushed the Barkokeba revolt (A.D. 132-135) and built on the ruin of Jerusalem a new Roman city, *Aelia Capitolina*. At this time, Hadrian introduced the most repressive legislation, prohibiting the practice of Judaism, in general, and the observance of Jewish festivals, in particular. Jews and Jewish-Christians were expelled from the city.

As a result of Hadrian's expulsion of the Jews, the positions left vacant by Jewish-Christian elders and leaders were filled by non-Jews. The ethnic cleansing, and persecution of anyone and anything Jewish influenced the new Gentile hierarchy to change the date of Passover from Nisan 14 to the following Sunday in order to show separation from the Jews and Jewish Christians, and thus avoid persecution.

Over the years a whole body of anti-Semitic type literature was produced by leading Fathers who defamed the Jews as a people and emptied their religious beliefs and practices of any value whatsoever. Two major casualties of the anti-Jewish campaign were Sabbath and Passover. The Sabbath was changed to Sunday and Passover was transferred to Easter-Sunday.

Finally, in A.D.325, at the Council of Nicea the Emperor Constantine settled the issue. He wrote, "Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd." He decreed that Passover be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring (that is, the Sunday after the Jewish Passover). To ensure that Easter-Sunday would never be celebrated at the same time as the Jewish Festival, the council decreed that if the 14th of Nisan fell on a Sunday, then Easter was to be celebrated on the following Sunday."

7. DOESN'T PENTECOST ALWAYS FALL ON A SUNDAY?

Pentecost always falls 50 days from the feast of first fruits. The events of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out with power, took place on a Sunday, but the day of the week is not mentioned. There was a controversy regarding the correct day for the offering of the "firstfruits," but in the year Christ died Pharisees and Sadducees were in agreement. See the study, "Three Days and Three Nights" at this web site.

8. WHEN SUNDAY IS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, ISN'T IT ALWAYS SOMETHING SPECIAL? COULDN'T IT BE INFERRED THAT SUNDAY WAS THE SPECIAL DAY FOR THE APOSTLES?

The first day of the week is mentioned eight times in the New Testament:

MATTHEW 28:1; MARK 16:1-2,9; LUKE 24:1; JOHN 20:1: All are accounts of the resurrection.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote their gospels many years after Christ's death, yet every one of them refers to Sunday as simply, "the first day of the week," nothing more, nothing special.

JOHN 20:19: The disciples were hiding in the upper room behind closed doors in terror of the Jews.

ACTS 20:7-8: The dark part of the first day of the week is Saturday night (see New English Bible) (MARK 1:21,32; LEVITICUS 23:32). The service began on Sabbath and continued into the night. The first day of the week began at sundown. Paul spent most of Sunday, the next day, walking through swampy country from Troas to Assos where he was to catch a ship. "Breaking bread" was done "daily" (ACTS 2:46) and was not necessarily associated with an assembly for worship. In this case it was most likely a going away supper for Paul.

1CORINTHIANS 16:1-2 "Lay by in store" does not mean, "put in the collection plate at the church." It means to set aside at home. Some of the modern translations put it in this way. It means that the first act of business in the new week should be to separate a portion for God's service. After God's tithe and offerings are separated then we may continue with our regular business. Money was never handled on the Sabbath.

The weekly Sabbath is mentioned in the New Testament fifty-six times.

Matt 12:1-8,10-12 24:20 28:1	Mark 1:21 2:23-28 3:2-4 6:2 15:42 16:1	Luke 4:16,31 6:1-9 13:10-16 14:1-5 23:54,56	John 5:9,10,16,18 7:22,23 19:14,16,31	Acts 13:14,27,42,44 15:21 16:13 18:4
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In the eight passages which mention the first day of the week there is no command to keep it; there is no record of its being appointed as a sabbath; no record of any blessing being placed upon it; no record of its being made holy; no record of any sacredness being attached to it; no promise of a blessing for its observance; no threat of punishment for its nonobservance. It is not once given any sacred title. There is no record that Christ kept Sunday or commanded it to be kept. There is no record that the apostles kept it or commanded it to be kept.

9. DID PAUL KEEP THE SABBATH AFTER HIS CONVERSION TO CHRIST?

ACTS 26:11 Saul the persecutor always knew where to find the Christians. He persecuted them in every synagogue. And they worshiped in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

ACTS 13:14-16 . . . In Antioch Paul worshiped on Sabbath.

ACTS 13:44 The next Sabbath in Antioch Paul preached to the Gentiles, (He didn't tell them to meet him on Sunday) and almost the whole city came to hear him.

ACTS 16:13 In Philippi, where there were no Jews therefore no synagogue, Paul went out by the river to worship on Sabbath.

ACTS 18:4,11 . . **In Corinth he "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath" for a year and a half, or 78 Sabbaths. If Sunday were indeed the new day of worship, doesn't it seem that he could have got that point across before a year and a half?**

ACTS 17:2 In Thessalonica "Paul, as his custom was, went in (to the synagogue) to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the scriptures."

10. WHY DOESN'T PAUL STATE SPECIFICALLY THAT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH?
IN FACT DOESN'T PAUL SAY THAT EVERY MAN SHOULD BE PERSUADED IN HIS OWN MIND?

- A. Paul and other NT writers exhorted all to read and study the Scriptures which “will make you wise unto salvation.” The only Scriptures available at that time were the Old Testament, which are replete with references to the sacredness of the 7th day Sabbath.
- B. The Jews were ready to kill Paul because he declared specifically that circumcision, was no longer necessary (GALATIANS 5:6-15). If Paul had declared that the Sabbath was changed or done away with, would not some account of the furor that would have caused be found in the account of his ministry. The Jews considered Sabbath observance at least as important as circumcision, yet great text is given to the account of the debate over circumcision and nothing is said about a change of the Sabbath.

Paul said, “I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (ROMANS 15:19). Nothing was left out.

- C. It is true that Paul said “Let every man be convinced in his own mind” (ROMANS 14:5). But isn't this the ideal we preach today. Each person must study and decide for himself the truth of the gospel of Christ. No observance, whether prayer or fasting or giving offerings, or Sabbath keeping is valid if the person does not understand the reason for what he is doing.

This statement reflects the change in Paul after the Damascus road. He no longer forced his beliefs on anyone. Even if he knew he was right he said “do not judge your brother.” How different from the Saul who dragged the Christians to Jerusalem in chains.

- D. Devout Jews held to the custom of fasting twice a week. Paul was probably referring to this custom, because He mentions eating and not eating along with observing and not observing certain days. The days observed appear to be those days upon which certain men fasted. The context does not mention the 7th day Sabbath (Romans 14:1-7). Paul appears to have kept the 7th day Sabbath, and there are passages which suggest that he also kept the festivals (1Corinthians 16:8, Acts 20:6, Acts 20:16). (See also 1Corinthians 5:7-8 where Paul instructs the church regarding the keeping of the Passover.)

11. DIDN'T PAUL DESCRIBE SABBATH KEEPING AS TURNING AGAIN TO WEAK AND BEGGARLY ELEMENTS?

GALATIANS 4:9,10 “But how after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years.”

Bible teachers have differing interpretations of this passage. The Galatians were not Jews. These people had been pagans, and followed the cults of sun worship. Some say that they were now turning back to the things which they had left - worship of heavenly bodies.

Other teachers say that the Galatians who had come to belief in Christ, had been taken in by the circumcision party who were “zealous for the law.” They had themselves circumcised, and began keeping all of the Jewish festivals *in order to be saved*. Paul was adamant that we are saved by faith in Christ - not by “works of the law.” Keeping the Jewish festivals *in order to be saved* would be no better than observing pagan astral festivals in order to live forever. Both involved a type of salvation by works, and so would be called “weak and beggarly elements.”

The apostle Paul refers to the law in two ways. Paul seems to be for the law and against it at the same time. This is most confusing to some. In Colossians 2:14, “the handwriting of requirements” is “wiped out,” while in Romans 3:31, he explains that justification by faith in Jesus Christ does not overthrow the law but “establishes” it. In Romans 7:6, he states that “now we are discharged from the law,” while a few verses later he writes that “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good” (7:12). In Romans 10:4, Paul writes that “Christ is the end of the law,” while in 8:3-4, he explains that Christ came “in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . in order that the just requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us.” Paul maintains in Romans 3:28 that “a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law,” yet in 1Corinthians 7:19, he states that “neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.” In 2Corinthians 3:7 Paul designates the law as “the dispensation of death,” while in Romans 3:2, he views it as part of the “oracles of God” entrusted to the Jews.

How can Paul view the law both as “abolished” and “established”, unnecessary and necessary? The answer is to be found in the context. When Paul speaks of the law in the context of salvation, he clearly states that law-keeping is useless. “If justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose” (Galatians 2:21). When he speaks of the law in the context of Christian moral conduct, he maintains the value and validity of God’s law. In fact, Christ came, “in order that the just requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us” through the working of His Holy Spirit. **While Paul said that the law was “abolished” as a method of earning salvation, he upheld the law as a standard of Christian conduct.**

Let me just say that we at Aggelia do not keep the law *in order to be saved*. We do our best to keep God’s commandments *because we believe that we have been saved, and are being saved, through the grace of Christ*. This includes the 4th commandment to keep the 7th day Sabbath.

12. BUT AREN'T WE UNDER GRACE NOW? THE LAW AND THE OLD TESTAMENT HAVE BEEN ABOLISHED. Please read the study entitled GRACE AND THE LAW.

13. THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL DID NOT MENTION SABBATH KEEPING AS A REQUIREMENT FOR GENTILE BELIEVERS.

“Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

Stealing, murder, disrespect for parents, bearing false witness, and taking God’s name in vain, were not mentioned either. This doesn’t mean those things are acceptable behavior for believers.

The appeal is made to Moses (meaning the first five books of the Bible) who is read in the synagogue every Sabbath. *It is assumed that the Gentile believers will be in attendance every Sabbath, to hear such reading*. Along with the history of God’s people, they will learn about the 10 Commandments, the prophetic festivals, the health laws, and all the other things relevant to their new relationship with the true God.

Peter admonished the Jerusalem council not to put a “yoke on the neck” of the Gentile converts “which neither our father nor we were able to bear” (Acts 15:10). What was this yoke? If the yoke refers to the 10 Commandments, then we must say that God put a yoke upon His own people which they were not able to bear. If however, the yoke refers to the man made concept of “righteousness by works of the law” then Peter is telling the council not to preach righteousness by works. This agrees completely with Paul.

14. WHAT ABOUT EPHESIANS 2:14?

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one (that is Jew and Gentile), and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”

In Ephesians 2, Paul is speaking about the separation of Jew and Gentile. “You know,” Peter said, “how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation” (Acts 10:28). Now, in Christ, they were to call no man unclean. The laws dictating the separation of Jew and Gentile were abolished.

15. NO ONE IS TO JUDGE ANOTHER REGARDING A SABBATH (COLOSSIANS 2:13-17).

“And you (Gentiles), being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, *having wiped out the handwriting of requirements* that was against us, which was contrary to us. *And he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.* . . . **Therefore** let no one judge you in food (grain offerings) or drink (offerings), or regarding a festival or a new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” (See also Hebrews 9:10.)

[NOTE: Food itself was not a symbol “of things to come.” The passage is not addressing dietary laws. The “food” and “drink” refer to the offering of grain and wine, called “meat offering” and “drink offering,” which were made with every animal sacrifice.]

Paul could be understood to say “let no one judge you regarding” (whether or not you keep) “a festival . . . or sabbaths.” On the other hand, he could be understood to say “**let no one judge you regarding” (the way in which you keep) “a festival . . . or sabbaths.”** The meaning is not absolutely clear. Since Paul himself appears to have kept the festivals, (at least Passover and Pentecost) I believe the second interpretation is the most likely. The Christians partook of bread and wine at Passover, rather than of a sacrificial lamb. They did not bring animals for sacrifice on any festival day. They may not have appeared at the Temple in Jerusalem, at the festival times, believing that Christ now ministered in heaven (the true tabernacle) not made with hands.

What is “the handwriting of requirements that was against us?” Some say that this refers to all of the ceremonial law along with the 7th day Sabbath. A more accurate translation of “handwriting of ordinances” is “the written code.” In context, this handwritten code is wiped out because we are forgiven. I personally believe that the “handwritten code” refers to all of the rules piled upon the Jews by the Pharisees who taught righteousness-by-works. Jesus said, they were “teaching for doctrine the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). Paul here says that it is no longer necessary to keep all those commandments of men., because we have been forgiven by faith in Jesus Christ.

The “handwriting of ordinances” was “against us.” Did God give His own people something that was “against them?” I think not! The law given by God was for their benefit. It contained a living prophecy of Messiah to come. The “traditions of men” as Christ called them, were a yoke which they were not able to bear.

16. DOESN'T THE WRITER OF HEBREWS SAY THAT THE LAW HAS BEEN CHANGED?

“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity *there is also a change of the law*” (HEBREWS 7:12).

In place of animal sacrifices we now have Christ - “the Lamb of God” (Hebrews 10:4, 9-10). In place of the Levitical priesthood we now have Christ our High Priest, who ministers in heaven - the true tabernacle (Hebrews 8:1-2). The new covenant has made the old covenant “obsolete” (Hebrews 8:13, 10:9). Three things are specifically said to be changed in religious practice - the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the Temple. Nowhere does the text say that the Ten Commandments were changed or abolished.

The law which was changed, was “received” on the basis of the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 7:11). The 7th day was “hallowed” at creation, long *before* a Levitical priesthood existed. In fact, the Ten Commandments were spoken from Mt. Sinai *before* the Levites were appointed as the priesthood (Exodus 20). The law which was changed concerned those sacrifices which were carried out in association with the Sanctuary (or Temple). No priesthood is necessary in order to keep the 7th day holy.

17. OUR CHURCH HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND I HAVE THE SPIRIT TO GUIDE ME. HE WOULD NOT LEAD ME WRONG.

JOHN 16:13	“when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.”
JOHN 17:17	“Thy word is truth.”
PSALM 119:142	“Thy Law is truth.”
JOHN 14:26	(the Holy Spirit) “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

The Holy Spirit will not teach anything that Christ did not teach, or did not say.

1 JOHN 4:1	“ <u>Believe not every spirit</u> , but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
ISAIAH 8:20	“ <u>To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.</u> ”
DANIEL 7:25	The Antichrist power will “think to change time law.” The only commandment that involves <u>time</u> is the Sabbath commandment.
2 CORINTHIANS 11:14	“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

18. HASN'T THE CALENDAR BEEN CHANGED SO MANY TIMES THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL WHICH DAY IS THE SEVENTH DAY?

Modern astronomers will tell you very quickly that no time has been lost in the last 3000 years, at the very least.

The manna fell for forty years. It fell on the six days of the week and did not fall on the Sabbath, thus reestablishing the weekly cycle (EX 16). There was no question in Christ's mind as to which day was the seventh, and no days have been lost since the time of Christ.

One calendar change which is frequently questioned was the Gregorian Calendar, accepted in 1752. It skipped 11 days, from Sept 2 thru Sept 14, but it did not break the order of the days. Sept 2 was a Wed. and Sept 14 a Thursday.

18. SO LONG AS I KEEP NINE OUT OF THE TEN ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

JAMES 2:10 "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."

LUKE 13:3 Speaking of sinners both great and small. "Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish."

If we know that something is right but we resist it, then we are really resisting God, and Christ Jesus. This is the spirit of sin, selfishness, and rebellion. God cannot take this spirit into His kingdom.

If we are careless with the Sabbath, we are really saying to others that this commandment isn't important. We are acting as if God just made up something to irritate us and to be a burden. We are implying that God is arbitrary, which is just what Lucifer said in the beginning. To be careless with the Sabbath and thereby encourage others to be so, is to impugn the character of God. This makes it a very serious, in fact the worst of sins.

In Eden there were two trees. In earth's last days there are two days. We must choose whom we will serve. God has said that the Sabbath is a sign between Himself and His people.

The Sabbath commandment gives the Title of the Ruler, The Territory over which he rules, and the Name of the Ruler: The Lord your God, Creator of the heavens and the earth. These are the elements needed to create an ancient "seal." The remnant of Revelation 7, who have the "seal of God," are also described in Revelation 12:17 as keeping the commandments of God. The 4th commandment was never excluded.

HOW TO KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY

LEVITICUS 23:32 The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday.

MARK 16:1,2 The Sabbath is over when the first day of the week begins at sunset on Saturday.

EXODUS 20:8-11 Refrain from work. Even in harvest time and planting time, refrain from work. (EX 34:21)

ISAIAH 58:13 Refrain from doing your own pleasure, that is secular entertainment, or activities which would call the mind away from spiritual things. On the Sabbath we renew our relationship with our God, and with fellow believers.

NEHEMIAH 13:15-21 Refrain from buying and selling on the Sabbath.

LUKE 4:16 Worship with others. (Leviticus 23:1 "holy convocation" means "sacred assembly")

MATTHEW 12:9-14 Do works of mercy, relieving pain and suffering.

LUKE 4:31 Share with others a knowledge of God.

LUKE 14:1 Enjoy Christian fellowship for the purpose of discussing spiritual things and for praying together.