

## Q & A #10

**Question:** I'm wondering why the Sabbath commandment is not repeated in the New Testament. My guess is that it was because it had been replaced by the first day of the week to honor the resurrection of Jesus.

**Answer:** You are correct that the fourth commandment is not repeated verbatim in the New Testament; but neither are the first, the second, and the third commandments. However, each of these commandments are affirmed in some way in the New Testament.

For example, Jesus said of the fourth commandment: "The Sabbath was made for man," (Mark 2:27) and "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:8).

It should also be kept in mind that first century Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, had the Old Testament as their Bible. Jesus and the apostles often quoted from the Old Testament in their teaching and preaching showing that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament messianic prophecies. Thus we see that the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 were the standard of living for first century believers. The apostle Paul stated that it was Christ who was present with the Israelites at the time the Law was given at Sinai (I Corinthians 10:1-4) and that "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Nearly every Jew during the period of Christ's life and ministry would have known the Ten Commandments by heart from required training in one of the many rabbinical schools in Judea and Galilee. They were quoted verbatim every Sabbath along the "Hear O Israel" of Deuteronomy 6:4. As the world's redeemer, Jesus custom was to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke 4:16). This was the expectation of all Jews in Israel and in the Jewish settlements throughout the Roman Empire. Luke, a Gentile himself, recorded that Gentile believers, moreover, had no difficulty accepting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment (Acts 13:42; 16:13; 18:4).

While 21<sup>st</sup> century Bible students may wish that the New Testament writers had repeated all the Ten Commandments in the New Testament, there is no requirement or necessity that they should have done so. However, reference to the "law" is abundant in the New Testament. This is a general term referring to the Ten Commandments as given by God on Mt. Sinai written on tables of stone secured inside the ark of the covenant. Many people today understand this as the *moral law of God*. The fourth commandment which is included is unchanged.

That the fourth commandment is permanent and unalterable can be derived by Jesus statement in his well-known "Sermon on the Mount." This message was like a presidential inaugural address to the Israelite nation. Notice that Jesus is unmistakably specific and forceful about the issue of the permanence of the law:

**"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill [fill full of meaning]. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."** (Matthew 5:17, 18)

It is for this reason that any attempt to retire or replace the Sabbath of the fourth commandment with a new day—the first day of the week—after the resurrection of Jesus, would have been regarded as a flagrant and open violation of the church's sacred trust.

The New Testament writers all wrote the gospels and epistle letters some thirty to fifty years after the resurrection of Jesus. While the event of the Resurrection is central in the life of the believer, its strategic reality is not meant to uproot the defining sign of Creation—the seventh-day Sabbath. Nowhere in Scripture is there recorded a weekly first-day assembly of Christians. Neither is there a hint of a command from Jesus or His disciples and apostles to retire the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, millions of Christ-followers worldwide have recognized and welcomed the ongoing blessing and relevance of the seventh-day Sabbath commandment. They invite fellow Bible-believers of every status, race, and culture to join them in weekly worship of Jesus on the Creation Sabbath. On average, every day of the year, 3,000 people throughout the world accept this invitation. This is comparable to adding a 3,000 member church every day.

Answer prepared by Daniel Knauft, author of *Sacred Time unRemembered—How the Original Sabbath Was Lost and Why It Matters*, (2014). This Q & A was edited by Kevin L. Morgan. ( 8/7/17)

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