

Jesus Kept The Sabbath: Should We?

by Bill Crews

Did you know that Jesus, because of His being in the flesh a Jew, was born under the law of Moses? Galatians 4:4 says so: *"born of a woman, born under the law."* And that, as a Jew under law to God, He observed the weekly sabbaths (rest days) and all of the other sabbaths? that He also observed all of the various other statutes, commandments and ordinances of the law of Moses? He ate no unclean meats; He kept the annual feasts, such as the passover and tabernacles; He observed the various animal sacrifices. Not only did He keep the law of Moses; he called upon other Jews to keep the law of Moses. He, in fact, was the only Jew who observed the law with perfection. *"Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them"* (Paul in Gal. 3:10, quoting Deut. 27:26). Paul's point is that every one who was under the law fell under that curse, except the Christ. He continued in all things that were written; He committed no sin at all. (Paul went on to show that Jesus by His crucifixion fell under another curse of the law, making it possible to redeem all who fell under the curse of Deut. 27:26 and all others who were guilty of sin; read it in Gal. 3:11-14.) **But it is an entirely different matter for one to assert that because Jesus observed the statutes of the law of Moses, so must we also today.** Nobody today is under the law of Moses, not even the Jewish people.

When Jesus was eight days old, He was circumcised (Lk. 2:21) in obedience to the covenant that God gave to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:9-14) and the teaching of the law of Moses (Ex. 12:44, 48; Lev. 12:3; Acts 15:1 -- *"circumcised after the manner of Moses"*). But see what Paul said about binding that same circumcision today in Galatians 5:2-4. When Jesus was forty days old, Joseph and Mary brought Him to Jerusalem (1) to present Him to the Lord as their first-born son (Lk. 2:22-23; Ex. 13:1-2, 11-13, 15; all first-born males of men and animals belonged to God, and the first-born sons were to be redeemed) and (2) to offer the sacrifices required by the law of Moses for Mary's cleansing (Lk. 2:22, 24; Lev. 12:1-8; being unable to afford the lamb, they offered either two doves or two young pigeons). Are we to follow these examples? No indeed! for we are not under that law.

Jeremiah, while the law of Moses (the old covenant) was still binding, foretold the time when Jehovah would make a new covenant, a covenant that would not be according to the covenant that God made with the children of Israel when He brought them out of the land of Egypt, a new covenant under which God would forgive iniquities and sins and remember them no more (Jer. 31:31-34). The writer of the Hebrew epistle quotes this very prophecy and declares it fulfilled in the new covenant of which Christ is the mediator (Heb. 8:6-13). When the priesthood was changed, from that of Aaron to that of Christ, the law was also changed (Heb. 7:12). Because the law of Moses could make nothing perfect, it was disannulled (Heb. 7:18-19). Christ took away the first that He might establish the second (Heb. 10:9). He is the surety of a better covenant (Heb. 7:22).

The ten commandments, which included the command to *"remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy,"* were certainly part, a central part, of the old covenant. They were written on two tables of stone, and placed in *"the ark of the covenant"* in the most holy place of, first, the tabernacle and, then, the temple (Ex. 24:12; 31:18; 32:15-16, 19; 34:1, 4, 28-35; Deut. 4:13; 5:22; 9:9-17; 10:1-5; Heb. 9:4). The *"ark of the covenant"* was called that because it contained the ten commandments, which are called *"the covenant."* In Solomon's time the only things remaining (gone were Aaron's rod and the golden pot of manna) in *"the ark of the covenant"* were *"the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb"* (1 Kings 8:9), and these are called *"the covenant of Jehovah, which he made with our fathers, when he*

continued on page 3 [280702]