

Are Christians To Keep The Seventh Day As A Sabbath?

by Bill Crews

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which He had made with His people when He brought them out of Egypt, *“which my covenant they broke”* (compare Exodus 19:5; 24:7-8 and Deuteronomy 5:1-3 — it is always God’s covenant which He *“made with”* or *“gave to”* Israel, a covenant which they broke by disobeying its statutes). Jeremiah goes on to show how the new covenant would be different from and superior to the old covenant.

Other passages show that this new covenant will be not only for the Israelites, but for all the nations. Isaiah spoke of the same thing when he wrote of *“the word of Jehovah (or the LORD)”* going forth from *“Jerusalem”* or *“Zion”* and of *“all nations”* flowing unto the mountain of God’s house (Isaiah 2:1-3). In Hebrews 8:6-13 the entire prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted and shown to be fulfilled with coming of the *“new covenant”* or the *“better covenant”* of which Christ is the *“mediator.”*

Were The Ten Commandments Part Of The Old Covenant?

Deuteronomy 4: 13 says, *“And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon the tables of stone.”* Deuteronomy 5:1-21 gives the ten commandments and again calls them *“a covenant”* which Jehovah made with *“us”* in Horeb (verse 3). Read also Exodus 34:28 and Deuteronomy 9:9 where the same point is made. Moses was told to place three things in *“the ark of the covenant”*: a golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the two tables of stone containing the ten commandments (Hebrews 9:4; et. al.). As shown above, when Solomon built the temple, only the two tables of stone remained in the ark, and they are called *“the covenant”* (1 Kings 8:9, 21). 2 Corinthians 3:4-14 refers to both the new covenant (verse 6) and the old covenant (verse 14) and shows that (1) the old covenant has passed away and (2) the old covenant at least includes the two tables of stone that Moses brought down from the mount. Other passages to read on the subject: Galatians 4:21-31; Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 7:11-12, 18-19, 22; 8:1-6; 9:15-20 and 10:1-10.

Sabbatarians Confuse The Issue

But sabbatarians want to hold on to the ten commandments because it is their principal defense of present day observance of the seventh-day sabbath. They see the force of these passages and arguments. They know that the old covenant was to give way to the new. So they, especially the Seventh-Day Adventists, assign to *“covenants”* an arbitrary definition supported by nothing in the Scriptures and by no scholar of the language. They reason like this: *“Now everyone knows that a covenant is an agreement between two parties. The old covenant was an agreement between Israel and God.. The new covenant is an agreement between those who are justified in Christ by God. The first covenant was not the ten commandments or any other ordinances given by God. It was simply Israel’s agreement with God to keep His commandments as recorded in Exodus 24:3. They broke the covenant in that they failed to keep their agreement. They, in fact, were unable to keep he covenant or agreement because they could not do all of God’s commandments due to their sin nature. But the new covenant is a new agreement between the redeemed and God to keep the same commandments (the ten) which Israel could not keep, but which the grace of God through Christ will enable Christians to keep.”* It evidently sounds good to many good people, but it is not what the Scriptures teach about the two covenants. God’s covenants are not like human covenants — *“agreements between two parties.”* God decides upon, devises, and gives man His covenants and requires man to keep them. Man does not make covenants with God; God makes covenants with man — and He decides all the terms and all the conditions and all the blessings or curses. We are not subject to (under) the old covenant, and the ten commandments were part of the old covenant. We have and are under a new covenant, and that new covenant contains nine of the ten commandments, only in a deeper and more intense sense (more than the acts of murder and adultery are forbidden, for example).

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