

"The Fourth Commandment"

This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Nov. 19, 2022.

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled "The Fourth Commandment." Following are some of the scriptures that I read.

Grace and expectations

Exodus 20:2—"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Exodus 20:8-11—"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 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."

Edict by Constantine

Early in the Bible study, I wanted to spend a short amount of time mentioning why very sincere people in this world keep Sunday as a "Day of Rest"—so I picked two reasons.

The first reason applies to individuals who put their emphasis upon what their church leadership explains about the day of rest.

Following is an excerpt from the baptistbulletin.org: "He [Constantine] was the first Roman Emperor who was a 'Christian' in name. He made 'Christianity' a state religion and changed the movement from a persecuted, numerically insignificant minority to a wealthy, popular cause. He built St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and showered the church with favors, also making it into something that could advance him. And he appointed Sunday as the official 'day of rest.' "

Studying Scripture

The second reason applies to Bible students who put their emphasis upon their interpretation of the Bible (rather than what Constantine said). There are various scriptures that Bible students use to confirm in their minds that Sunday should be the "day of rest"—but I focused only upon two sets of Scripture.

For the record, I want to make the following statements.

- Since I accept the Son of God as my Savior, I observe the seventh-day Sabbath—although from a Christian perspective rather than from a Jewish perspective.
- Many of my friends keep Sunday as a day of rest.
- Some friends use the changing of circumcision in the New Testament (found in Acts 15:19) to explain their view about the changing of the day of rest in the New Testament.
- They compare the verses about the everlasting covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17:7 and 11) and the verses about the perpetual covenant of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:16) and they compare the verses about the sign of circumcision (Genesis 17:11) and the sign of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:13 and 17).
- Since I believe in conviction and compassion, I will be kind to my friends who have their conviction about the day of rest being on Sunday.
- Since my friends are mature and loving, they will be kind to me for having my conviction about the seventh-day Sabbath.

John 13:34-35—"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Old Testament pearls

Here is a listing of verses in the Old Testament that talk about the Sabbath day.

Genesis 2:1-3—"Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He

rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

- Exodus 16:22-30—involving the manna
- Exodus 31:13-17—remembering Genesis 2:1-3
- Exodus 35:2-3—Old Testament penalty
- Leviticus 16:31—Sabbath of solemn rest
- Leviticus 23:3—Sabbath of solemn rest
- Leviticus 23:4-44—Feasts of the Lord
- Leviticus 25:1-7—land Sabbath
- Numbers 15:32-36—Old Testament penalty
- Numbers 28:9-10—Old Testament burnt offering
- Nehemiah 10:31—buying and selling
- Nehemiah 13:15-22—closing gates of Jerusalem
- Isaiah 56:2-7—not defiling the Sabbath
- Isaiah 58:13—not doing our own pleasure (with the Moffatt Translation using the word "business" twice in the place of "pleasure")
- Jeremiah 17:21-22—carry no burden on Sabbath

New Testament pearls

On Wednesday night, I had so many scriptures that I did not get to the list of New Testament scriptures on my handout.

I intend to cover New Testament scriptures at the 2:00 Bible study on Saturday, Nov. 19.

Healed on Sabbath

- *Matthew 12:9-12*—He healed a man with a withered hand—(Mark 3:1-6 and Luke 6:6-11).

Matthew 12:11-12—"Then He said to them, 'What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.' "

- *Luke 13:10-16*—He healed a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years.

Luke 13:15-16—"The Lord then answered him and said, 'Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?' "

- *Luke 14:1-5*—He healed a man with dropsy.

Luke 14:3-5—"And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?' But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. Then He answered them, saying, 'Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?' "

- *John 5:5-10*—He healed a man with an infirmity for 38 years.

John 5:8-10—"Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.' "

John 5:16—"For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath."

John 5:17-18—"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

- *John 7:21-23*—He contrasted them doing circumcisions on the Sabbath and Him healing people on the Sabbath.
- *John 9:1-14*—He healed a blind man.

John 9:16—"Therefore some of the Pharisees said, 'This Man is not from

God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.' Others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?' And there was a division among them."

John 9:39-41—"And Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.' Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, 'Are we blind also?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, "We see." Therefore your sin remains.' "

Defended disciples on Sabbath

- *Matthew 12:1-8*—He defended His disciples plucking heads of grain to eat on the Sabbath—(Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5).

Matthew 12:3-8—"But He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.' ' "

Did you catch the phrase in verse 7?

"I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

Do you remember ever hearing that phrase before?

"Learn what this means"

Matthew 9:10-11—"Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' "

Matthew 9:12-14—"When Jesus heard that, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.' "

Not condemning the innocent

Let's conclude with Matthew 9:13 and Matthew 12:7.

Matthew 9:13—"But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' "

Matthew 12:7—"But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless."