

THE LAST DAY OF PROPHECY

DISCOVER THE REST OF THE STORY

THE LAW OF THE LORD

It was among the most magnificent, awesome, earth-shaking events in history—when God Himself spoke His moral law from Mount Sinai. These Ten Commandments are so incredibly important to God that He chose not to rely on a mere prophet to deliver them, but instead manifested His very presence among humans. The Bible even says He spoke these precepts with His own lips—“God spoke all these words, saying....” (**SEE EXODUS 20:1.**)

Interestingly, He did more than just speak His law—He wrote the commandments with His own finger onto tablets of stone. Have you ever wondered why? “My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips” (**PSALM 89:34**). God was saying that there is an unchangeable quality to His law. Yet many believe the Ten Commandments were, in fact, changed—or done away with. But how can that be true when Jesus said, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail”? (**LUKE 16:17**). Jesus was the voice of God on earth! Do we trust what He says about the binding nature of God’s Ten Commandments, including the fourth one, on His people today?

THE SEAL OF GOD’S LAW

Many believe the Sabbath commandment serves as the seal within God’s law. For instance, official seals always contain these three parts:

1. The name of the owner of the seal
2. The owner’s title
3. The owner’s jurisdiction

Seals validate official documents and show that the owner of the document intends to stand behind it. Well, did you know the fourth commandment contains all the elements of an official seal? It identifies God’s name: “the LORD your God;” His title: “the One who made heaven and earth;” and His territory: “the heavens and the earth.”

The Sabbath commandment shows us by whose authority the Ten Commandment law itself was given. It also provides evidence that the Lord planned for it to be kept!

SABBATH-KEEPING IS IMPORTANT

Thus, as it is part of God’s law, we need to take the Sabbath seriously, as the Bible says, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (**1 JOHN 3:4**). Furthermore, “For the wages of sin is death” (**ROMANS 6:23**).

Can we overlook even one of God’s Ten Commandments? James warns us, “Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (**JAMES 2:10**).

God’s law is a matter of life and death. (Breaking it has serious consequences!) And Sabbath-keeping is clearly enjoined in the fourth commandment of God’s holy law. The deliberate breaking of any one of the Ten Commandments, including the fourth, is a sin.

But did you know we have another reason to keep the fourth commandment? Christians will gladly follow Christ’s example of Sabbath-keeping, His regular custom. Our only safety in this question is to diligently study the Bible, “rightly dividing the word of truth” (**2 TIMOTHY 2:15**).

CAN THE CHURCH MODIFY GOD’S LAW?

It is dangerous and unwarranted to tamper with God’s law. “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (**DEUTERONOMY 4:2**).

Solomon also wrote, “Every word of God is pure. ... Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar” (**PROVERBS 30:5, 6**).

God has specifically forbidden anyone from changing His law by deletions or additions. In the fourth commandment, God commands us to observe the seventh-day Sabbath as a holy day. It seems God knew people would forget His Sabbath, so He began this commandment with the word “remember.”

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You will not find any place in the Bible in which the Lord sets any other day as a weekly holy day. Remember, He spoke the fourth commandment with His own lips—we might expect that to change the Sabbath, He would speak directly again, but there is no evidence in Scripture that He has.

SABBATH AND SALVATION

Some wonder if keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is really necessary for salvation. (First of all, nobody is saved by keeping the commandments.) Since the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments, we can approach it the same way we approach the other nine. Ask yourself, “Is not killing people really necessary to please God?” If your answer to that question is “yes,” then you have your answer regarding the fourth commandment as well.

Obviously, keeping the Sabbath won’t save you—God’s law is designed to show us the error of our ways and how to live rightly. Yet the idea that you can willfully break God’s commandments and still please God is just not biblical. If you accept the salvation of Christ but keep stealing from your employer—have you truly repented?

When a person knows God’s will in any of these areas and says, “I’m not going to obey this or that commandment for my own reasons,” then the Bible’s message is clear. If we purposefully sin when we have a clear understanding of God’s requirements, there are serious consequences. “If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (**HEBREWS 10:26**).

“He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (**1 JOHN 2:4**). It is no more legalism to keep the seventh-day Sabbath than to obey any of God’s other commandments.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Q. Isn’t the Sabbath for the Jews only?

A. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man” (**MARK 2:27**). It is not for the Jews only, but for all men and women everywhere. The Jewish nation did not exist until 2,500 years after the Sabbath was made.

Q. According to Romans 14:5, the day we keep is a matter of personal opinion, isn’t it?

A. Romans 14 is on judging one another (**vv. 4, 10, 13**). The issue here is not over the seventh-day Sabbath, which is a part of the moral law, but the yearly feast days of the ceremonial law. Jewish Christians were judging Gentile Christians for not observing them.

Q. Isn’t it legalism to keep the Sabbath?

A. It is no more legalistic to avoid adultery than it is to keep the Sabbath. Law and grace do not work in competition but in cooperation. The law, including the Sabbath, points out sin, and grace saves us from the penalty of our sins—and empowers us to overcome sinful desires and deeds. See **1 JOHN 5:3**.

Q. Doesn’t Colossians 2:14–17 do away with the seventh-day Sabbath?

A. Not at all. It refers only to the sabbaths which were “a shadow of things to come” and not to the seventh-day Sabbath. There were seven yearly holy days, or holidays, in ancient Israel which were also called sabbaths. These were in addition to, or “beside the sabbaths of the LORD” (**LEVITICUS 23:38**), or seventh-day Sabbath. These all foreshadowed, or pointed to, the cross and ended at the cross. God’s seventh-day Sabbath was made before sin entered our world, and therefore could foreshadow nothing about deliverance from sin. That’s why Colossians 2 differentiates and specifically mentions the sabbaths that were “a shadow.” The seven yearly sabbaths that were abolished are listed in **LEVITICUS 23**.