

This article is found in the February 1, 2010 issue of a magazine that we were given by some well-meaning friends in an effort to help us see that the weekly Sabbath was “taken away” at Calvary. Since this article contains essentially the same arguments that June and I have seen over the course of 24 years of Sabbathkeeping, we do not find it necessary to mention the name of the organization responsible for its dissemination.

SHOULD YOU KEEP THE WEEKLY SABBATH?

IN THE late 1980's, small groups of Methodists laid siege to Suva, the capital city of Fiji. Men, women, and children—all dressed for church—manned 70 roadblocks. They stopped all commercial traffic as well as domestic and international flights. What prompted that action? A demand to make the nation return to strict Sabbath observance.

In Israel, every new multistory building erected since 2001 must have at least one elevator that automatically stops at each floor. For what purpose? So that devout Jews, who observe the Sabbath from Friday evening until Saturday evening, do not have to do the “work” of pressing the buttons in an elevator.

In Tonga, a kingdom in the South Pacific, all work is forbidden on Sunday. No aircraft is allowed to land, and no ship is permitted to dock. Any contracts signed on that day are not viewed as valid. The constitution of Tonga requires that Sunday be “kept holy” by all, regardless of a person’s religious beliefs. Why? To ensure nationwide observance of the Sabbath.

As the above examples show, many people feel that God requires them to keep a weekly Sabbath day. In fact, some say that Sabbath-keeping is of utmost importance, believing



Newspapers document the roadblocks set up by groups of Methodists demanding that Fiji return to strict Sabbath observance



Might it have been given - the commandments kept by Abraham?
(Gen. 26:5)

that it involves our eternal salvation. Others feel that the most important commandment from God is to keep the Sabbath. What is the Sabbath? And does the Bible urge Christians to observe a Sabbath day each week?

What Is the Sabbath?

The English word "Sabbath" comes from a Hebrew word meaning "rest, cease, desist." Although the Genesis account says that on the seventh day Jehovah God rested from his creative works, it was not until the time of Moses that God's people were instructed to observe a 24-hour day of rest, or Sabbath. (Genesis 2:2) After the Israelites left Egypt in 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah miraculously provided manna for them in the wilderness. Concerning the collecting of this manna, they were instructed: "Six days you will pick it up, but on the seventh day is a sabbath. On it none will form." (Exodus 16:26) We are then told that "the people proceeded to observe the sabbath on the seventh day," from sunset on Friday evening to sunset on Saturday evening.—Exodus 16:30.

A short time after those instructions were given, Jehovah provided a law concerning Sabbath-keeping, including it among the Ten Commandments given to Moses. (Exodus 19:1) The fourth of those commandments stated, in part: "Remembering the sabbath day to hold it sacred, you are to render service and you must do all your work six days. But the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God." (Exodus 20:8-10) Sabbath-keeping thus became an integral part of life for the Israelites.—Deuteronomy 5:12.

Did Jesus Keep a Weekly Sabbath?

Yes, Jesus did observe the Sabbath. Concerning him, we are told: "When the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth his Son, who came to be out of a woman and who came to be under law." (Galatians 4:4) Jesus was born an Israelite and as such was under Law, and that included the Sabbath law. It was not until after Jesus' death that the Law covenant was taken away. (Colossians 2:13, 14) Knowing when these events took place in the stream of time helps us to

I recommend re reading Col. 2:13-14 !!

"Six days you will pick it up, but on the seventh day is a sabbath. On it none will form."—EXODUS 16:26



understand God's view on the matter.—See the chart on page 15.

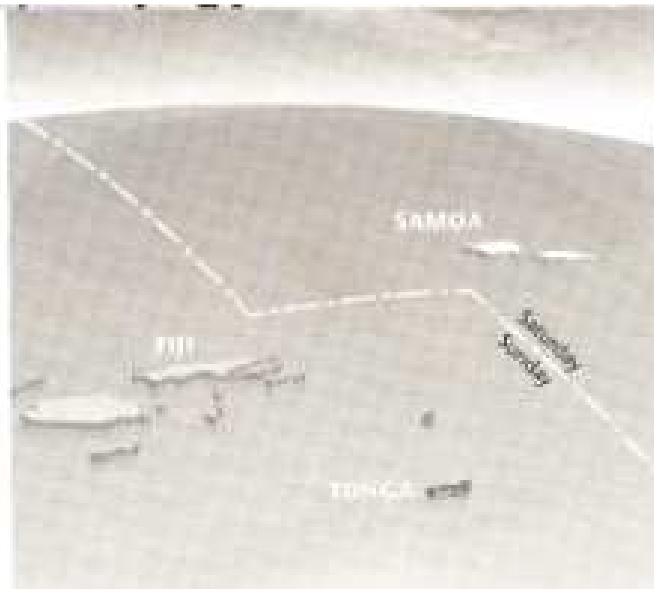
True, Jesus did say: "Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17) But what does the expression "to fulfill" mean? To illustrate: A builder fulfills a contract to complete a building, not by ripping up the contract, but by finishing the structure. However, once the work has been completed to the client's satisfaction, the contract is fulfilled and the builder is no longer under obligation to it. Likewise, Jesus did not break, or rip up, the Law; rather, he fulfilled it by keeping it perfectly. Once fulfilled, that Law "contract" was no longer binding on God's people. → *Then righteousness is no longer binding, either, since it was fulfilled (Rom. 7:12)*

A Christian Requirement?

Since Christ fulfilled the Law, are Christians obligated to keep the weekly Sabbath? Under inspiration, the apostle Paul answers: "Therefore let no man judge you in eating and drinking or in respect of a festival or of an observance of the new moon or of a sabbath; for those things are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to the Christ."—Colossians 2:16, 17.

Those inspired words suggest quite a change in God's requirements for his servants. Why the change? Because Christians are under a new law, "the law of the Christ." (Galatians 6:2) The former Law covenant given through Moses to Israel came to an end when Jesus' death fulfilled it. (Romans 10:4; Ephesians 2:15) Did the commandment about keeping the Sabbath also come to an end? Yes. After saying that "we have been discharged from the Law," Paul went on to refer to one of the Ten Commandments. (Romans 7:6, 7) So the Ten Commandments—including the Sabbath law—are part of the Law that came to an end. God's worshippers, therefore, are no

Wow! Adultery, murder, stealing, whoring, etc. - all made legal!!



The International Date Line and the Sabbath

The international date line presents a challenge for those who believe that they must keep a weekly Sabbath on the same day everywhere. The date line is an imaginary line that runs for the most part through the Pacific Ocean along the 180th meridian. Countries to the west of the date line are one day ahead of those to the east.

For example, when it is Sunday in Fiji and Tonga, it is Saturday in Samoa and Niue. So if a person keeps the Sabbath in Fiji on Saturday, members of his religion in Samoa, just 711 miles away, would be working because it is Friday there.

Seventh-Day Adventists in Tonga keep their Sabbath on Sunday, reasoning that by doing so, they are keeping the Sabbath at the same time as their members in Samoa, a little over 500 miles away. However, at the same time, Seventh-Day Adventists less than 500 miles away in Fiji are not resting because it is Sunday there, and they observe the Sabbath on Saturday!

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This is an "apparent" problem, but not in reality. If you're confused, move somewhere else!!

"The Law has become our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith. But now that the faith has arrived, we are no longer under a tutor."—GALATIANS 3:24-25

longer required to observe a weekly Sabbath.

The change from the Israelite to the Christian system of worship could be illustrated this way: A nation may change its constitution. Once the new constitution is legally in place, people are no longer required to obey the former one. Even though some of the laws in the new constitution may be the same as those in the former constitution, others may be different. So a person would need to study the new constitution carefully to see what laws now apply. Additionally, a loyal citizen would want to know when the new constitution went into effect.

In like manner, Jehovah God provided over 600 laws, including 10 main ones, for the nation of Israel. These included laws about morals, sacrifices, health matters, and Sabbath-keeping. However, Jesus said that his anointed followers would constitute a new "nation," (Matthew 21:43) From 33 C.E. onward, this nation has had a new "constitution," founded on two basic laws—love of God and love of neighbor. (Matthew 22:36-40) Although "the law of the Christ" includes instructions that are similar to those in the Law given to Israel, we should not be surprised that some laws are very different and that others are no longer required. The law requiring the observance of a weekly Sabbath is one of those that are no longer binding.

*→ FUNNY WE NEED
FEEL THIS IS THE BIBLE INTERPRETATION ONLY!!
Has God Changed His Standards?*

Does this change from the Law of Moses to the law of the Christ mean that God has changed his standards? No. Just as a parent

will adjust the rules he makes for his children, taking into consideration their ages and circumstances, Jehovah has adjusted the laws his people are required to obey. The apostle Paul explains the matter this way: "Before the faith arrived, we were being guarded under law, being delivered up together into custody, looking to the faith that was destined to be revealed. Consequently the Law has become our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith. But now that the faith has arrived, we are no longer under a tutor."—Galatians 3:23-25. *So was god was the tutor?*

How does Paul's line of reasoning apply to the Sabbath? Consider this illustration: While at school, a student may be required to learn a certain subject, such as woodworking, on a particular day each week. However, upon entering the workforce, he may need to use the skills he learned, not just on that one day, but on every day of the week. Likewise, while under the Law, the Israelites were required to set aside one day every week for rest and worship. Christians, on the other hand, are required to worship God, not just one day per week, but every day. *— work 6 days = rest 1 on*

Is it wrong, then, to set aside one day every week for rest and worship? No. God's Word leaves such a decision to each individual, saying: "One person decides that one day is holier than another. Another person decides that all days are the same. Every person must make his own decision." (Romans 14:5, God's Word) While some may choose to view one day as more holy than others, the Bible clearly indicates that God does not expect Christians to observe a weekly Sabbath.

Romans 14:5 addresses "fast" days - notice the bit about eating - not the sabbath!!

Facts to Remember About the Sabbath:

Although a Bible verse may speak of the need to observe a weekly Sabbath, we need to ascertain the time when these words were stated.

BEFORE THE TIME OF MOSES

The law regarding the Sabbath was not given prior to the time of Moses and the Israelites.—Deuteronomy 5:1-3, 12-14.

GOD'S LAW TO ISRAEL

The law concerning the Sabbath was not given to other nations. (Psalm 147:19, 20) It was given as "a sign" between Jehovah and the sons of Israel.—Exodus 31:16, 17.

The weekly Sabbath day was just one of many sabbaths that the Israelites were commanded to observe.—Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:4-8; 25:4, 11; Numbers 28:26.

THE LAW OF THE CHRIST

When deciding what God requires of Christians, in 49 C.E., the apostles and older men in Jerusalem made no mention of the need to observe a weekly Sabbath.—Acts 15:28, 29.

The apostle Paul was concerned about Christians who put emphasis on observing special days.—Galatians 4:9-11.

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1513 B.C.E.
LAW GIVEN TO ISRAEL

33 C.E.
END OF LAW GIVEN TO ISRAEL

2010 C.E.