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THE SURE WORD By Jonnie Hutchison

SHOULD WE KEEP THE SABBATH?

The fourth of the ten commandments God gave to His chosen people Israel was to “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). Some teach that this command is still in force and that we must observe the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week) as a holy day.

It is true that God sanctified the 7th day of the week as He rested or ceased His creative acts (Genesis 2:2-3) and later made the 7th day of the week a day of rest for His chosen nation (Exodus 20:8-11). Sabbath observance had some stringent requirements including restrictions regarding work and travel (Acts 1:12). The penalty for violating these requirements was death (Exodus 31:14-16). Are these Sabbath requirements still in effect? Does the penalty remain?

The Sabbath along with the other Ten Commandments was a covenant made exclusively with the people of Israel. When Moses repeated these commandments in Deuteronomy 5, he said in verses 2-3 “The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but **with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.**” Regarding the Sabbath Exodus 31:13 reads, “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is **a sign between Me and you** throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.’” The Old Testament law, which includes the Ten Commandments, was never intended to be universal in its application.

This first covenant served its purpose and was taken out of the way having been nailed to the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14-16). It was replaced by the law of Christ - the New Testament (Hebrews 8:7; 10:9-10). Jesus is the “mediator” of this new covenant (Hebrews 9:15). It is different than the old covenant God made with Israel (Hebrews 8:8-13). Inspiration refers to the “law written and engraven in stones” (a clear reference to the 10 commandments) the “ministry of death” and of “condemnation” and said it was “passing away” (2 Corinthians 3:7-18). Why? Because one who would attempt to be justified by following a spiritual law which was no longer in force would fall from grace (Galatians 5:4).

The Sabbath Day is the only one of the ten commandments not incorporated into the New Testament law. It is no longer in force. The first day of the week is to be observed by Christians, not the seventh (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2. We will discuss that in next week’s article. Thanks for reading. Questions or comments? Email greenplain@greenplainchurchofchrist.org or visit us at <http://greenplainchurchofchrist.org>