

The Sabbath

(November 14, 2006)

For those of you who aren't aware, Latter-day Saints call Sunday the "Sabbath-day," and have a number of written and unwritten rules and expectations for observing it.

When I was a child, I remember singing a song in primary that went something like this:

"Saturday is a special day,
It's the day we get ready for Sunday!
We clean the house and we shop at the store
So we won't have to work until Monday.
We brush our clothes and we shine our shoes
and we call it our "get the work done" day!
Then we trim our nails and we shampoo our
hair so we can be *ready* for Sunday."

Orthodox Jews obey the Sabbath day and I do not begrudge this one bit. So what is the issue with the LDS view of the Sabbath?

Well what exactly is the Sabbath-day according to the Bible?

Is it something to be trifled with?

When did it begin, to whom was it given, and is it applicable to Christians today?

Are there dangers in embracing Sabbath-day observances and then not keeping it?

Is it errant to have a day of worship today?

I am going to offer 7 concepts regarding the Sabbath day in anticipation of the most common assumptions, questions, and misinterpretations of it today.

It is a hot topic as there is so much misunderstanding of it even in the Body of

	<p>Christ.</p> <p>Okay, first a clarification:</p>
	<p>I do not believe it is my place or any persons place to judge what people do relative to gathering, worshipping, or honoring God on a given day of the week.</p> <p>If someone wants to observe the Sabbath day, the Lord's day, the year of Jubilee, or whatever, go for it. I think God honors it.</p> <p>But I think it is important to understand the Biblical presentation of what is being observed in order to help eradicate errant impositions many religious institutions make regarding the observance of certain days in order to "honor God"</p> <p>So . . . if you follow a day, God bless you. And if you don't, well God bless you too.</p> <p>But if you impose a day on others in the name of God as being required for worthiness, well then we've got a problem.</p> <p>Okay . . .</p>
<p>#1 There is one Sabbath-day and one only – it is on Saturday.</p>	<p>Sunday cannot be a Sabbath-day anymore than your dog can be a cat.</p> <p>Your dog might act like a cat, purr like a cat, walk like a cat, and even eat cat food, but your dog is still a dog.</p> <p>The Sabbath is on Saturday. It has always been on Saturday and there are good biblical reasons for this – which we'll discuss.</p> <p>When a member of the LDS church says, "Do you obey the Sabbath?" and applies it to observances and actions on a Sunday, it is an misnomer at best, and a complete bastardization of God's ways at worst.</p>

Why?

Let's take a minute and examine the Day.

First, the word Sabbath means rest in Hebrew.

What does it mean? Rest.

It is associated with God's rest after He finished creating the world.

He was not tired on this day, the rest means he stopped creating. The creation was at an end. The creation was finished.

The true Sabbath goes back to what God did at the end of creation.

Genesis 2:2-3 And on the seventh day (which is Saturday) God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

But there is a very important point to understand here:

The Sabbath "rest" was NOT, I repeat, was NOT instituted at the creation.

Adam and Eve did not observe a Sabbath-day.

Why would they? What did they have to rest from in the Garden of Eden?

GOD WAS WITH THEM! And there was no labor to complete! Nothing to finish!

So why is the Sabbath-day mentioned in Genesis?

For the same reason Eve was called the "Mother of all Living" prior to her having

	<p>children, and Judas being referred to (by John) as the “betrayer of Jesus” before he commits the betrayal.</p> <p>The Genesis record was written as an explanation of why there was a Sabbath, not as evidence of there being a Sabbath at the time.</p> <p>Remember Moses wrote Genesis in retrospect. He wasn’t there with Adam and Eve. And when he wrote, he tied in many things that would help explain to the Children of Israel “why?”</p> <p>How do we know this?</p> <p>Let’s read Nehemiah 9:13-14</p> <p>Speaking of God Nehemiah writes:</p> <p><i>Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.</i></p> <p>The Children of Israel observed the Sabbath after it was revealed in Genesis, but it was not practiced before Sinai.</p> <p>So let’s drop the idea that the Sabbath-day was a practice from the beginning. It wasn’t.</p>
<p>#2 But the Sabbath-day was a commandment wasn’t it?</p>	<p>Absolutely. But what was the context of the command?</p> <p>In order to fully get the gist of the Sabbath-day, first mentioned in Exodus 20, it must be seen in the context of to whom it was given:</p> <p>The Children of Israel. This is why when the</p>

practice of it is important to understanding it.

Deuteronomy 5:1

*“Deuteronomy 5:1-2 And Moses called **all Israel**, and said unto them, Hear, **O Israel**, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant **with us** in Horeb.”*

The ten commandments then begin at verse 6.

When we read the ten commandments in their context (Exodus 19-24) they are inseparably connected with the OLD COVENANT of the Law given to the Children of Israel.

We are now under the NEW COVENANT of grace as all the law was fulfilled in Christ in whom we live by faith.

Heb 8:13 A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Now there are always, always people who want to burden others with aspects of the Old Covenant or the Law.

They want there to be outward demands that make people feel inwardly holy.

They want to impose law over grace.

Herbert W. Armstrong of the WW Church of God emphasized the Sabbath, dietary demands, and even grooming standards for women.

But Hebrews 10:29 explains the Lord’s view of those who attempt to reintroduce aspects of the Law as mandatory for salvation and worthiness:

“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye,

	<p><i>shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot <u>the Son of God</u>, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done <u>despite unto the Spirit of grace?</u></i></p> <p>Now the Ten Commandments are good.</p> <p>So how do they operate under the New Covenant of Grace found by faith in the Lord Jesus?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">They are amplified in Jesus and they are made possible through Jesus.</p> <p>Let's take a few examples:</p> <p>Commandment number six: Thou shalt not kill!</p> <p>What did Jesus say about "Thou shalt not kill?"</p> <p>He said, don't even get angry (amplified) And how do we not even get angry? Through faith in Him as He paid the price for all anger Himself (made possible).</p> <p>Commit adultery?</p> <p>Don't even look upon a woman (amplified) How? Through faith in Him who carried our sin and provides strength to overcome them. (made possible by Jesus).</p> <p>All things are amplified and made possible through Him!</p> <p>HIM!</p> <p>I'll explain the Sabbath day according to this amplification and possibility made possible through Him in a moment.</p> <p>Okay, number 4</p>
<p>#3 "But the Sabbath is said to last forever and to be perpetual!" You shout</p>	

How could it no longer be necessary?

In Exodus 31:16-17 God said:

*Therefore the **sons of Israel** shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant. It is a sign **between Me and the sons of Israel** forever. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.*

First, this was an agreement between Israel and God. Period.

Secondly, if phrases like these were literally applied today to both the Christian Church and the Jews, then everything in the OT that is said to be perpetual should continue today, right?

The burnt offerings (Exodus 29:42)
Incense burnings (Exodus 20:8)
Ceremonial Washings (30:21)
the Passover Feast (12:14)

And so should all the covenants and obligations of the Old Testament:

Tithing
Dietary Law
Circumcision

But the writer of Hebrews is explicit in explaining that the entire Old Covenant has been replaced by something better!

Hebrews 8:6 *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

If the New Covenant is better, the New Covenant is different.

Old Covenant = writing on parchment

	<p>New Covenant=writing with a Word Processor.</p> <p>Is the Old still Good? Certainly. Are writings on the Old still viable? Sure. Are the words on the parchment less applicable? No.</p> <p>But is there a “better” way? Yes. Is it more advanced? Certainly. Has it replaced parchment writing? To a great extent, yes. Is it a completely new approach? Not completely. It is <i>based</i> on the method of parchment writings, but is expanded into a host of other processes and applications.</p> <p>The Old Covenant morality remains in place, but is seen through the New Covenant world view.</p> <p>Don’t kill says the sixth commandment of the Old.</p> <p>Don’t even be angry, say the new.</p>
<p># 4 But according to the Gospels, Jesus kept the Sabbath? And we should follow His perfect example!</p>	<p>You know, I have to admit, I hate it when people use Jesus as their personal puppet to manipulate others into guilt or shame for their little pet doctrines.</p> <p>If you do something they feel is wrong in their eyes, Jesus becomes their little tool:</p> <p>“Jesus would never do that.”</p> <p>But by the same token His example is ignored on issues they don’t think are important.</p> <p>Okay . . .</p> <p>Yes. Jesus observed the Sabbath. But why?</p>

Galatians 4:4-5 says:

*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, **made under the law**, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Simply put, the Old Covenant did NOT end until the death of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, which is what we operate by now, not by prophets and Old Covenant observances.

During Jesus' life, the Law was still in effect, and He observed all of the requirements, so as to save all from the demands of the Law.

If Jesus did not keep the whole of the Law, even in the smallest points, he would have been disqualified as the Messiah.

The veil being torn in two at His death signified that it was finished . . . just like God was finished on the 7th day, and rested, or completed His work!

Isn't that beautiful?

Where the last day of the week was a day of rest - the Sabbath - for those under the law, Jesus said

"Come unto me **and I** will give you rest" everyday of your regenerated life!

Here Jesus amplifies the Law.
Here Jesus becomes our Sabbath, here Jesus becomes our daily rest!

And not just one day of the week but every day of the week!

In that the Jews do not yet recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and that they are under the Old Covenant demands, it only makes sense that

	<p>they continue to observe the genuine Saturday Sabbath day.</p> <p>But for Christians to try and observe this day it is unnecessary, impossible, and out of character with what being Christian truly means.</p> <p>Do you see the inanity of tying Sabbath-day observances to personal worthiness?</p> <p>Yet in light of all this, people still push to observe a Sabbath-day.</p>
<p># 5 But didn't Paul regularly go to the synagogue on the Sabbath after the New Covenant began?</p>	<p>Of course he did. Come on, now! What is the context?</p> <p>The early members of the Church were for the most part Jews. Paul went to evangelize them. Old things take time to die and new things take time to grow.</p> <p>God allows for things to pass away and grow at the same time! There is a natural overlapping and exchange that occurs when God deals with humanity.</p> <p>Remember Paul said, "to the Jew I became as a Jew, to those under the law, I became under the law so I could save some."</p> <p>And even though Paul visited the temple on the Sabbath day to reach the unconverted Jews, he continued to preach the New Covenant as a means to nourish its tender roots toward maturity.</p> <p>Regarding the Sabbath day, he writes:</p> <p>Colossians 2:16-17</p> <p><i>Therefore let no one judge you in food or in</i></p>

drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths. For these are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.

Have you ever been judged by others based on the food you eat, the drinks you drink, or the inattention you give to a day of the week?

Ever eat out on a Sunday and find yourself getting stares . . . from other people eating out on Sunday too?

The hypocrisy kills me.

Speaking of what Jesus did by way of the cross Paul writes in verse 14 that He :

blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross."

As an interesting and important side note, the Sabbath of the Old Covenant was not just the last day of the week, Saturday, but it also included monthly and annual rest-days.

It even included a fiftieth anniversary YEAR of rest!

Why don't the LDS practice the monthly "new Moon" Sabbath days, or the yearly Sabbatarian festivals? (according to Leviticus 25:17)?

Why don't the LDS take one full year out of fifty and celebrate the Sabbath Jubilee (verse 8-24)?

The whole premise is a blatant misapplication and misappropriation of the Law, errantly resurrected from the past, applied to the present, and used to control the spiritual lives of good people who *could, WHO COULD* have daily, worshipful rest in JESUS.

<p>#6 But the Bible doesn't specify an alternate day of worship for Christians?</p>	<p>Specifically, this is true. But we know a few things about meeting on the Lord's day, or first day of the week.</p> <p>First, the disciples gathered in Troas . . .</p> <p>Acts 20:7 And upon the <i>first day of the week</i>, (Sunday) when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.</p> <p>We also know that on the <i>first day of the week</i> . . .</p> <p>(John 20:19-23) Jesus first appeared to His disciples with a commission to evangelize.</p> <p>(Acts 2:1) the first gospel sermon was preached about the death and resurrection of Jesus.</p> <p>(Acts 2:41) the first converts were baptized and gathered into Christian churches.</p> <p>(1st Corinthians 16:2) that believers laid aside their gifts for the Lord's work.</p> <p>The first day of the week is traditional and has beautiful significance.</p> <p>But it is not a Sabbath-day, it comes with no legislation, and it is contrary to the covenant of Grace to assign these meanings to it.</p>
<p>#7</p>	<p>The Children of Israel were under the burden of the Law and were commanded to take a day of rest on Saturday, a month end rest, an annual rest, and a whole year rest every 49 years as part of their required "Sabbath."</p>

LDS do not practice a Sabbath according to any of its legitimate Biblical applications.

It is ridiculous to try and seriously apply Sabbath-day observances to Christian gentiles.

The penalty for breaking the Sabbath was death for the Children of Israel. True Sabbath day observance would include the same.

As the last day of the week was a day rest for the Children of Israel, commemorating God's finished work in the creation and pointing to the finished work of Jesus on the cross

Both are tied to the rest and peace of God – one by virtue of the creation, the other by virtue of His Son.

Where the last day of the week, Saturday was looked forward to by the Jews under the Law, the first day of the week is used as a springboard for Christians today for worship, breaking bread, and fellowship. It is not required day, however, by God's law, and it is not a day of restrictions as the LDS try to make it.

Finally, there is also something to be said about the collective LDS attempts at even keeping it, which are something quite farcical.

The restrictions on the Children of Israel were prohibitive and confining.

Travel, meal preparation, activities, and even motion were greatly restricted or condemned.

None of this is obeyed by the general LDS populace.

I've long been amused by the Sabbath manipulations that so frequently occur in LDS people concerned with the Law.

	<p>You can swim, but only in your own back yard and only with your own family.</p> <p>You can go to the store, but only if you run out of something really, really important.</p> <p>Television is okay, but only general conference . . . and the Superbowl.</p> <p>Vacation Sabbath day is a complete oxymoron, and my son made it to State finals Sabbath day is next in line.</p> <p>I've no problem with Mormonism attempting to obey the Jewish Sabbath, but based on everything we've discussed, they don't have the right lineage, they don't have the right day, they don't have the right application, and they don't exercise the right punishment for disobedience to it, and they frankly don't have the right dedication.</p> <p>But perhaps is most disturbing, is the condemnation such practices place on all who attempt to live by such Law and fail.</p> <p>James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.</p> <p>May the Covenant of Grace wash over the LDS church, and release its members to rest in Him every day of their lives and not to seek a false sense of rest on a fictitious day of the week.</p>
	<p>Other passages to consider:</p> <p>THE SABBATH YEAR OF JUBILEE Ex 23:10,11</p> <p>The commandment is to sow and reap for six years, and to let the land rest on the seventh, "that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the held shall eat. It is</p>

added in

De 15:1

... that the seventh Year should also be one of release to debtors.

De 15:1-11

Neither tillage nor cultivation of any sort was to be practiced. The sabbatical year opened in the sabbatical month, and the whole law was to be read every such year, during the feast of Tabernacles, to the assembled people. At the completion of a week of sabbatical years, the sabbatical scale received its completion in the year of jubilee. [JUBILEE] The constant neglect of this law from the very first was one of the national sins that were punished by the Babylonian captivity. Of the observance of the sabbatical year after the captivity we have a proof in 1 Macc. 6:49.

Heb 4:1 Therefore, a promise being left to enter into His rest, let us fear lest any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For also the gospel was preached to us, as well as to them. But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

3 For we who have believed do enter into the rest, as He said, "I have sworn in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest;" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested the seventh day from all His works."

5 And in this place again, "They shall not enter into My rest."

6 Since then it remains that some must enter into it, and since they to whom it was first preached did not enter in because of unbelief, 7 He again marks out a certain day, saying in David, "Today," (after so long a time). Even as it is said, "Today, if you will hear His voice,

	<p>harden not your hearts." 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 So then there remains a rest to the people of God. 10 For he who has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from His. 11 Therefore let us labor to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of unbelief.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p> <p>You know, I think every person LDS or Christian agrees that marriage, children, and family are a great blessing of the Lord.</p> <p>Just want to take a selfish moment and publicly thank my wife Mary for staying with me all these years, for caring for the girls and home while I'm home and away, and for turning her life over to the Lord.</p>	