

VV STUDY NOTES: 11th March 2022

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Jesus, Author and Perfecter of Our Faith

Scriptures: Heb. 10:35–39, Rom. 1:17, Hebrews 11, Josh. 2:9–11, Heb. 12:1–3

My honest opinion of the LSG for this quarter is that the TOPIC approach has enabled them to ignore the obvious messages of the Book of Hebrews:

- The New Covenant has displaced the Old Covenant.
- The 10 Commandments are unquestionable part of that Old Covenant.
- The distinction between Moral Law and Ceremonial Law is a human invention.

In our recent VV discussions there has been a lot of emphasis on a Relational Faith as opposed to a Transactional faith. The change in Covenants directly impacts that issue.

I am NOT against the Sabbath or the 10 Commandments. They were Schoolmasters to bring us to Christ! But they were one part in a much bigger and better plan.

- I don't think any on the NT writers were against having a Sabbath.
- There are many good reasons in favour of a day of worship, fellowship, and service.
- Jesus took the OLD COVENANT and distilled them to two principles. Love for God and Love for our fellow human beings.
- Having distilled them, he then expanded by his life and teachings in ways beyond our wildest human imagination. Love took on new dimensions that were the basis of eternity, encapsulated in 1 Cor 13.

My objective this week is to ask difficult questions that the book of Hebrews cries out for us to ask.

1. PRIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT

I cannot accept that the creation happened in 6 literal 24hr days, but I absolutely believe GOD (Christ) created everything. If the creation record is a description of periods of time, then the 7th Period is not a single day. Therefore, when we are invited to REST in God, it is not limited to time restrictions.

Even if the days of Creation were literal 24hr days, and the world is less than 10,000 years old the following facts would still be true.

- The timespan from creation to Sinai far exceeds the limited timespan of the Mosaic Covenant.
- There were no 10 Commandments, and no written revelation of God's will for mankind.
- There is no record of anyone ever keeping the Sabbath.
- There are limited records of sacrificial offerings, but certainly nothing in the scale or format of the Mosaic Covenant.

For salvation to be even possible during that time, it could only have happened under the circumstances spelt out by the Apostle Paul in **Romans 2:1-16**. It is a tragedy that so much of Christendom, including the evangelical church has failed to comprehend the importance of that passage. The passage addresses an issue that impacts the character of God. **Will God ever say to anyone on the day of Judgement: There is no place for you because you were born in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and I couldn't talk to you?** The Holy Spirit has never been on strike!

In the days of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc there is no record of any written commandments or a 7th day Sabbath. This is the period when many of those listed in Hebrew 11 as examples of FAITH, lived.

That also included Moses' Parents whose act of faith was before the Old Covenant, and Rahab who had no knowledge of it when she bravely saved the spies.

2. THE MOSAIC COVENANT TILL THE TIME OF JESUS (1500 years ??)

The period of the Mosaic Covenant was extremely limited, and was punctuated by repeated rejection of God, and hundreds of years when the Temple was either non-existent or neglected.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt to set them up as a NATION, they were coming out of SLAVERY, and an environment of continuous work with NO RESPITE. The Mosaic Covenant with its tough strictures gave them the chance of being SCHOOLED into a dependency and love for God, and each other. Would a strong emphasis on the Sabbath been important in that context?

Acts 15: 1-29 When the Council of Jerusalem met to decide how the Gentile Christians should relate to the teachings of Moses Peter and James strongly agreed with Paul. The only requirements they made were related to items they believed were offensive to God: **'you are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality'**. There is no mention of any of the other commandments.

Acts 15: 10-11 (Peter) "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No, we believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are"

If the 10 Commandments had never been written, could any of us seriously believe that the Life and Teachings of Jesus, together with the rest of the New Testament would FAIL to provide all the spiritual and moral guidance needed to prepare us for the Kingdom of God, especially with the promised guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit?

NT Sabbath Facts:

Last week, I mentioned that Jesus was only called HIGH PRIEST in the book of Hebrews and nowhere else in Scripture. There are other patterns of information that we do well to address, particularly especially about the Sabbath.

- **No NT writer_ever** advocates the importance of Sabbath worship.
- Jesus goes out of his way to challenge the legalistic approach of the Pharisees to the Sabbath.
- He does say "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath".
- Jesus never tells us how we should keep the sabbath.
- The writings of the early church fathers provide evidence that worship on the 1st Day of the week was well established in non-Jewish Christian groups as early as the 1st Century, and certainly in the 2nd Century.

The last two references to the Sabbath in Scripture

COL 2:16 NIV

"Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what to eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come: the reality, however, is found in Christ"

HEB 4:9-13 NIV

"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest"

Sabbath Myths:

1. *The Sabbath is the Seal of God (Read 1 Cor: 1:22; Eph 1:13 for the real deal)*
2. *There will be a Universal Law forbidding worship on Sabbath at the end of time. The US Senate debated and rejected two laws in the 1880's that would have restricted non-essential business from being done on a Sunday and would have restricted the length of a working day.*
 - *Slavery had been abolished but many workers were working 7 days a week and over 12 hrs per day.*
 - *Business Leaders opposed the changes... not surprising!*
 - *Unions supported the changes In favour of the health and wellbeing of the ordinary worker.*
 - *SDA's & Seventh Day Baptists ...vehemently opposed it.*
 - *The proposed laws did not compel anyone to worship on any day.*
 - *The Senate voted against the measures, a few States enacted parts of the measures.*
 - *In the ME AGE, what likelihood is there that this could ever happen worldwide?*

OTHER REALITIES

1. Most Messianic Jews worship on the 7th Day Sabbath.
2. Many Messianic Jews and other celebrate the Jewish Festivals and have gone out of their way to emphasise the way in which these Festivals foreshadowed the coming of Christ.
3. There are over 500 Saturday worshipping churches and sects in our world today.
4. There is no condemnation in the NT of worship on the 7th Day, or any other day.
5. **DO NOT JUDGE ANYONE, LET EACH PERSON HAVE THE FREEDOM TO FOLLOW THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE..... IN CHRIST. THAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**