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Is The Sabbath For Christians?

By Harold Turner

Like most every other Bible doctrine, the day for Christian worship is one of controversy. Some have brushed this matter aside with indifference, believing that it doesn't really make any difference what day one keeps for worship. However, if we sincerely desire to know and do God's will, we cannot approach any matter with indifference. Since this is a controversial issue, I want to share with you some thoughts that may help us have a better understanding of this issue.

What is the sabbath day? From Exod. 20:10 we learn that "the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." From Exodus 35:2 we learn that the sabbath is "an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death." From Deut. 5:15 we learn that the sabbath was to be kept as a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In Exod. 31:17 God said that the sabbath "is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." The sabbath was the seventh day of the week, given to Israel to be kept holy and in remembrance of their deliverance from bondage, and a day in which no work was to be done.

When was the sabbath day given for man to observe? Some believe that it was given to man at the beginning, and use Gen. 2:1-3 as proof - "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all work which God created and made." This only tells the day that God rested, and why He sanctified this day, but it does not teach that God gave the sabbath for man to observe at this time. The sabbath is not mentioned for man's observance until after Israel's deliverance from bondage, which is over 2500 years from creation. Neh. 9:13-14 states clearly that God made known to Israel His holy sabbath when he came down upon Mount Sinai and gave them the covenant of the ten commandments. Since Deut. 5:15 states that it was to be kept as a day of memorial of their deliverance, it could not have been kept prior to this. Since Exod. 31:17 states that the sabbath was a sign between God and Israel, it could not have been prior to Israel's becoming a nation, which is after their deliverance. Notice Deut. 5:2-3, "The Lord our God

made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made NOT this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." This plainly shows that this covenant of the ten commandments was not given prior to this time. Eph. 2:11-12 and Rom. 3:1-2 shows that this covenant was not given to the Gentiles. Hence, it was given only to Israel, and at the time of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

How long was the sabbath to remain in force for man to keep? Is the sabbath binding on Christians today? Exodus 31:12-13 states, "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." Does the expression "for ever throughout their generations" mean without end, or until the end of a limited time? We observe, from a study of the Old Testament, many things that Israel was to observe "for ever throughout their generations", which are clearly taught in the New Testament to be no longer practiced. Notice the following such things - Circumcision (Gen. 17:13 and Gal. 5:1-6), The Passover (Exod. 12:4 and Lk. 22:16, 1 Cor 5:7), The Levitical priesthood (Exod. 27:20-21), The offering of the lambs daily (Exod. 29:38-42), The various other sacrifices (Lev. 7:35-38). Each of these were to be continued in practice "forever throughout their generations." Hence, Exod. 31:12-13 obviously does not demand any more observance than these others. The expression "for ever throughout their generations" obviously means until the end of this generation - the Jewish age, or until the new Christian generation began.

In Mat. 5:17-18, Jesus stated that he came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and assures us that not one small part of the law would pass away until it was all fulfilled. Hence, the law would not pass away in parts, but when fulfilled, it would all pass at the same time. Eph. 2:15-16, and Col. 2:14 show that the law was fulfilled at the cross, and taken out of the way. The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, but now that Christ

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A Mature Attitude

By Coy Walters

When one becomes a Christian, does he become immune to sin? One has to but ask every striving Christian this question to find that this is certainly not the case. Or, better yet, ask someone who is not a Christian and he can give you many instances where one who professes to be a child of God has erred. It is true that becoming a Christian will not cause one to have a perfect character.

On the other hand, can one who is a child of God always fall back on the fact that he is not perfect? God expects his children to grow and to mature. He expects more of those who have been Christians for several years that he does from babes in Christ. But, God expects all to grow and to mature as His children. Peter relates this idea to us in this way, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:1-2). The Hebrew writer expresses that this was a problem among the Christians to whom he wrote, "For when the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12). Peter again shows us that the Christian life is to be one of development, saying, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love" (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

There is an attitude portrayed by old testament characters which I am sure would make us better Christians, would make any person better, and would make this world a better place in which to live if applied. This is an unselfish attitude, which many fail to obtain, and which takes a great deal of maturity to practice. Observe the following examples of this mature attitude.

When Abraham left his homeland at the request of God, he took with him his nephew, Lot. Years later both men became rich in cattle, flocks and herds. "And the land was not able to bear them,

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CAN ONE BE SAVED OUT OF THE CHURCH?

It is an admitted fact that salvation can be had outside of man-made churches, but salvation is not offered apart from the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). The fact that it is generally admitted by those who advocate denominationalism, that a person can be saved outside the membership of their churches, proves the uselessness of such churches!

1. When people contend that one can be saved outside the Lord's church they are taking the position that they have absolutely no need for the blood of Christ. This position contradicts the teaching of the New Testament (Heb. 9:22), which shows that Christ gave his blood to purchase the church, and thereby only in the church does the blood save (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).

2. Those contending for salvation outside the Lord's church are contending for salvation in the Devil's kingdom. The church and the kingdom are the same institution (Mt. 16:18,19). One is lost until he is born again, is baptized as an obedient believer (Jno. 3:5; Mk: 16:16), and therefore enters into the church, which is the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:1, 13).

3. When one contends for salvation outside the church he is contending for salvation outside the family of God, for the church is God's family (I Tim. 3:15). There are only two families on earth. Questions: Where is salvation? In the Lord's family (the church), or in the Devil's family? Another question: Does God have any children outside his family? Or, can a person be saved while yet in the Devil's family.

These questions must be dealt with by every person, when they are reaching a conclusion as to the necessity of membership in the Lord's church.

—Garland Elkins

IS THE SABBATH (CONT.)

has come we are no longer under this schoolmaster Gal. 3:24-25. Rom 10:4 states that "Christ is the end of the law . . ." Heb. 10:9 states regarding the two covenants (the old and new testaments), "He taketh away the first that he might establish the second."

But, didn't Jesus keep the sabbath? Yes, he lived under the Old Testament period. He was circumcised according to the law Luke 2:21, He kept the old passover Luke 22:15. The law, including all the ceremonies and sacrifices, was in force until the death of Christ.

What about the apostles, didn't they keep the sabbath after the cross? No. All references to the apostles going to the synagogues on the sabbath shows their going was to preach Christ to the Jews. On the sabbath all the Jews would be gathered in the synagogues. The apostles took advantage of this opportunity to preach Christ to them. They preached and taught the old testament law to be completely fulfilled, and not to be practiced. Study carefully the following - Rom. 7:1-7, Gal. 3:10-29, 4:1-31, 2 Cor. 3:6-18, Heb. chs. 8-10.

Christians, who live under a new covenant, in a new institution - the church, keep a new day, the first day of the week. It was upon this day that Christ arose from the dead (Luke 24:1, 7, 13, 21). The church was established on Pentecost, which fell upon the first day of the week. The early church assembled upon the first day of the week to keep the memorial supper of the Lord (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2, 11:18-34). In addition to these teachings, historians also show that the early church kept the first day of the week as the day for Christian worship. Ignatius, who lived during the first century (AD30-107) wrote, "Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all days of the week." Clement, who lived during the second century (AD 153-217) wrote that the Christian, "in fulfillment of the precepts according to the gospel keeps the Lord's day glorifying the Lord's resurrection." The fact that both the New Testament, and historians affirm that Christians kept the first day of the week as the day of worship should be sufficient for us.

We should profit from the mistakes made by the children of Israel, and keep traditions and doctrines of men from becoming a part of our worship. We have enough to keep us busy without adding more. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

"Lord, grant me the patience to endure my blessings."

What Ever Became of Sin?

By Lloyd A. Deal

Karl Menninger founded and with his father and brother developed a psychiatric center in Topeka, Kansas, now world renowned. He has written a dozen books and belongs to a score of national psychiatric organizations, several of which he founded. Because of Dr. Menninger's unchallenged psychological and psychiatric eminence, and because his record through the years has been concretely constructive in mental health, prison reform, and general social responsibility, it is significant that he has written a book entitled "Whatever Became of Sin?"

In a book review of the Evangelical Book Club, it is pointed out that a relatively few years ago there was not question in our nation of the existence of sin. However, today even the word itself seems to have disappeared. "Actions once called sin are labeled crime by politicians and law enforcement officers. Other former sins are called symptoms of diseases by sociologists and psychiatrists. Some former sins are now considered normal, acceptable, and healthy . . . The psychiatrists try to relieve the diseased of their guilt." I personally have seen in just the years of my own adulthood that homosexuality has gone from a sin to a disease to accepted normal behavior - in the eyes of many men, that is.

"Against this background, Menninger issues a strong call for a revival of the 'use of the word sin - not for the word's sake, but for the reintroduction of the concepts of guilt and moral responsibility.' He speaks strongly to ministers, priests, and rabbis, for 'these are our moral leaders. It is their special prerogative to study sin, . . . to identify it, to define it, to warn us about it, and to spur measures for combating and rectifying it.' He issues a challenge for the modern sermon to deal with sin - sin in general and sin in particular. Lawyers, police, leaders of the communication media, statesmen, and doctors should all be moral leaders. But Menninger places the primary responsibility on the church leaders.

In addition to discussing the transformation of sin into a crime or a symptom of disease. Menninger identifies collective irresponsibility as sin. By this he means acts which would be called sin if an individual committed them. But for which responsibility seems to disappear when they are sanctioned by a group. The participants in a four-man robbery would be accounted guilty and punished. But

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A MATURE ATTITUDE (CONT.)

that they might dwell together" (Gen. 13:6). Later there was a strife between the herdsmen, and "Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8). Abraham then told Lot to look at the land round about them and to choose which direction he wanted. Abraham then went in the opposite direction. Abraham takes what is left after Lot picks the land of his choice. This is quite different from what we see many times. We often see brothers and sisters quarreling over what their parents have left behind. We even see Christians unwilling to give in, in some purely personal opinion, for the sake of a friendship.

The next example is that of Isaac. In Gen. 26, we find Isaac in the land of Gerar. Here he digs a well. The other herdmen of the land strive with Isaac and his herdmen over the well. So what does Isaac do? Run them off from the well that his herdmen dug? No! He moves to another place and there digs another well. Here he faces the same problem again. What does he do this time? He moves again. Many would have argued that they had dug the well and that the others involved must leave. Isaac, rather than cause trouble, gives up what was rightfully his. This indeed takes a mature attitude.

Another example of this mature attitude is in 1 Sam. 15. David is chosen to be the new king in place of Saul. Saul sets out to kill David, but Jonathan, Saul's son, becomes David's much loved friend. Jonathan is willing to place his own life in danger to help David. This alone shows great character in Jonathan. But when one thinks about it, Jonathan becomes even more mature to us. He might have succeeded his father as king had it not been for David. Jonathan stands to lose the most, but it does not appear in his character to be a resentful loss because he, too, has this unselfish attitude.

In every relationship of life, let us strive to develop this mature attitude. It will help in marriage, in the community, in the church, and in being a true child of God.

"If it wasn't for the optimist, the pessimist would never know how happy he wasn't."

"The contemplation of sin gives pleasure, the memory of it pain. Before men sin they think of the gain, after they sin they despise the gain and think of the guilt. Remember Judas!"

The Danger of Tradition

By W. R. Smith

The church is on the march really and truly when, and only when, the rate of processing catches up with the rate of additions. As long as conditioning of the members lags far behind the increase in numbers this statement is somewhat misleading.

Lack of leadership ability and/or alertness on the part of bishops in indoctrinating new and older members will prove fatal to both parties. Hence, the success of leaders is determined by the success of the followers. Competent leaders know where they are going and how they are going to get there. Those who are ignorant concerning the objectives to be reached, how they are achieved, and are not interested in learning should quit calling themselves elders. By doing so, perhaps their chances to enter heaven will be enhanced.

Faithful and competent leaders not only keep their eyes on the goal, but they also lead the way (1 John 10:4) and influence the followers to go along with them to the summit. In doing this according to the pattern there is a minimum of confusion and a maximum of peace and joy (1 Cor. 14:33). Under these conditions each member, babe and grownup alike, will be exercising himself in the type of work suited to his talents and giving the amount of time commensurate with his responsibilities. Proper foods and exercises in spirituality result in growth, and growth is indispensable to fruit bearing. Only the fruitful can abide in the body (John 15:2).

We may conclude, therefore, if faithful leaders make proper use of the means afforded them by the Scriptures, not one member of the flock who is in good standing with the congregation over which they preside as elders will be turned back as lost at the judgment. Are the unfaithful members included among this number who are saved? They are not (Mat. 25:30). A program designed to revive the dead timber should always be in operation. The divine pattern required that all the weak and sickly members be under constant and tender treatment to restore them to health and good fellowship (Gal 6:1). Those who are not retrieved by this procedure have but one other chance. The last and final effort on the part of the leadership must follow the pattern; namely, "to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). Those who are lost in spite of this treatment or effort to save them will not be charged against the bishops in the great day of

accounting. But the lost on whom little time and effort are spent, will be the responsibility of the pastors (Heb. 13:17).

Withdrawal of fellowship from the wayward after a reasonable period of consistent chastening is God's plan of salvation for lukewarm and ungodly members. To ignore this plan of salvation for undaithful members is as perilous as it is to fail to give alien sinners the information and persuasion they need by which to be saved.

The objective then, towards which the shepherds are guiding the flock has two parts, viz: (1) To indoctrinate the members - keep them strong and energetic and guard them from falling victim to hurtful influences, and (2) to evangelize and convert the lost. Christian teachers of the congregation are constantly revealing the pattern of morality and spirituality by which all are to live. The overseers, by ruling well, take up where the teachers leave off by influencing the saints to live by the pattern. Where this type of leadership prevails, no one can truthfully say; "the lessons have been taught but they remain to be done."

How to achieve this ideal is the supreme challenge. Impossible, you say!!! True, there are no ideal churches, and neither can there be; yet, "our grasp must exceed our reach or what's a heaven for." Peter (1 Pet. 2:21-22) tells us that Christ left us an example that we should follow his steps. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Shall we say this standard is too fantastic, hence unworthy of our very best efforts? We dare not! In like manner, it is necessary for the leaders to visualize to visualize (Prov. 29:18) and move the congregation towards the ideal - "A glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

There is no challenge which faces the church today more serious than that of watching for the souls of the members of the body of Christ (Heb. 13:17).

"A friend is someone who knows all about you, but still likes you."

"Please be patient, God isn't finished with me yet."

"The contemplation of sin gives pleasure, the memory of it pain. Before men sin they think of the gain, after they sin they despise the gain and think of the guilt. Remember Judas!"

WHATEVER BECAME (CONT.)

what is the moral responsibility of the individual, Menninger asks, when 400 or 4,000 persons join in the robbery?

What is sin? The early church fathers listed seven cardinal sins. Menninger reiterates these sins as being relevant for today and adds some new ones. He condemns the sins of pride, lust, fornication, adultery, pornography, gluttony, anger, violence, aggression, sloth, envy, greed, avarice, affluence, waste, cheating, lying, and cruelty. However, he emphasizes that none of these sins are THE sins per se, but only a form or expression of it. Sin is not against rules, but against people.

I have not read the book, but I am impressed with the fact that this great man of medicine and social concern is saying what the Bible says, Sin is sin; calling is something else or changing the laws of our nation will not affect the results. Other people will still be injured; the sinner will yet be destroyed and degraded physically, emotionally, or spiritually; and, most importantly, God will always be offended.

Maybe there is yet hope that some leaders will be brought back to thinking about sin and its consequences. Let's remember to pray that governmental leaders will be more concerned about righteousness: first, for the sake of our Nation. Proverbs 14;34 states, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Secondly, people must first be aware of sin before they will respond to the God and Savior who provided for forgiveness of sin.

"We have an undenominational Father, an undenominational Savior, an undenominational Holy Spirit, an undenominational Bible, an undenominational apostleship. If we are children of God and followers of the Savior and partakers of the Holy Spirit and lovers of the Bible and believers in the apostles' doctrine, how can we be denominational people?"

"He who prides himself on saying what he thinks should be careful what he thinks."

"If you feel that you are living farther from God; just remember that you are the one who has moved."

"Life is action and reaction. You speak today; tomorrow you hear the echo of your voice."

"Small souls crave public notice."

Watch For Their Souls II

By Clovis Ragsdale

The dictionary defines a tradition as a doctrine or idea that is handed down from one generation to another. Traditions may be fine as long as they do not influence and affect our relationship to God. God has always given man sufficient instructions with the demand that he follow them. To Joshua, God said, "that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law . . . turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Men in all ages have shown a tendency to want to change these plans by adding to them his own ideas. This is in effect to say, "Lord I know what you have said, but I know a better way."

The nation of Israel is a prime example of this problem. Chosen, tried by captivity, delivered in a miraculous way, and then given God's written law at Sinai to guide them. Yet, throughout the years following, they persisted in adding to the law. A Jewish authority has estimated that with God's law plus their own traditions Israel had about six hundred and thirteen precepts. No wonder Peter said to the brethren at the council in Jerusalem, (Acts 15;6) "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Jesus said (Mark 7;13) "Making the word of God of none effect through your traditions." Their traditions undermined the law of God, making it impossible for the Jew to please God by these traditions. Hence, their traditions influenced and so affected their relationship to God as to make them displeasing to Him.

Do we still have the problem of traditions today? The answer would have to be yes. In spite of Paul's statement of 2 Tim. 3;16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." This indicates that the Bible is all that is needed to live an acceptable Christian life.

The early church was able to keep the Jewish traditions from becoming entrenched into its worship. However, new ideas arose which did begin to change the pattern of the church. One of the first changes made was in placing the eldership under the control of a ruling elder or Arch-bishop. This eventually grew into the papacy. Men began to legislate creeds which differed from the Bible. Infant baptism, instrumental music, and other ideas, not mentioned in

the Bible, were added to the work and worship pattern of the church. Christianity was making the same mistake made by the children of Israel - adding traditions to God's pattern. Eventually the 'Christian religion' became divided, the true church had lost its identity in the concepts of modern religion, and the purpose and mission of the church was hampered - especially the mission of saving the souls of lost men. Jesus had prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17;21).

The Jew was obviously seeking a deeper state of spirituality when he added his traditions to God's laws. But, does one reach a higher plane of spirituality when he goes beyond that which is written? No, he becomes a transgressor! To grow and to improve should be the goal of every child of God. In 1 Peter 2;2, we are told how to grow - "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." We grow by the word of God, not by the things that men have added to His word.

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