

Question on Sabbath:

Hi Wayne, I referenced the 3rd commandment on Facebook ...to keep the Sabbath... And my pastor posted this back.....By the end of the book of Acts, the believers met on the First Day of the Week (Acts 20:7). In 1 Corinthians they met on the First Day of the Week (1 Corinthians 16:2). Jesus rose from the Dead on the First Day of the Week (Mark 16:9)! Now, let us give Him the First fruits of our Week and gather somewhere to Worship Him with other believers today!

Can you help me here...to understand God's way.

Response:

Hi [omitted]. I will be glad to answer your question, but it may take more than one chat box.

You are correct. God commanded the Sabbath day observance. He set it apart at creation. (Gen. 2:1-2). He commanded it be observed in the 10 Commandments. (Ex. 20:8-11). Notice the Sabbath was also for the gentiles (strangers). (Ex. 20:10). He re-emphasized that in Isaiah 56:2,4,6). He said it was forever. (ex. 31:16-17). When Messiah comes to establish the Messianic Kingdom, He will teach Torah. (Is. 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2). This specifically includes the Sabbath. (Ez. 44:23-24; Is. 66:22-23). The Torah is written on the hearts in the New Covenant. (Jer. 31:33). Believers will keep the Torah after the rapture. (Rev. 12:17; Rev. 14:12.) Part 2 to follow.

To address your Pastor's comments, I would say.

Acts 20:7 does not say that Believers met on the first day of the week. It says, "7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." The cut and paste removed the italics, but the word "day" in your Bible is in italics. This means it is not in the original text. It was added by the translators. The text originally said the "first of the week" which is Saturday night after the sun sets. That is when the Jewish people have their Havdalah service. Havdalah means "separation." It sets the Sabbath apart from the rest of the week. It is the closing of the Sabbath. That is why Paul taught until midnight. Sunset to midnight was not uncommon. He left Sunday morning to continue his journey as that was the first day of the week. Part 3 to follow.

1 Corinthians 16:2 says nothing about meeting on the first day of the week. It says, "2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." Again, cut and paste removed the italics, but "day" is not in the original. There is no mention of a meeting or religious gathering. Here is the context. In first century Israel, businesses closed at 2pm on Friday to prepare for the Sabbath. The money boxes were closed and the doors were secured. After the Sabbath, when Havdalah was concluded, then the merchants would open the money boxes and count what they made during the week. Paul said when you do that count, lay aside some from your earnings so that when Paul came to collect money for the poor in Jerusalem, each person would already have what they wanted to give laid aside. There is nothing said about offering plates in church on a Sunday morning. That is being read into the passage. Part 4 to follow.

Look at Mark 16:9 as referenced by your Pastor. Notice again that "day" is in italics. Yeshua arose sometime between the sunset of Saturday and the sunrise on Sunday. When exactly, it does not say. All we can say for sure is that Mark 16:1 says "Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him." So, the women had observed the Sabbath, and waited until the Sabbath was past to come to the tomb only to find it empty. Why did they wait until the Sabbath was over to come to the tomb? Because they were keeping the Sabbath. Yeshua did arise on the first of the week. That day was the Feast of First Fruits. When we celebrate the Feast of First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14), we are celebrating the resurrection as God commanded. He commanded a celebration, but man chose to disregard God's commandment and commemorate Sundays instead. Part 5 to follow.

The keeping of the Sabbath was forbidden, and observing Sunday commanded, by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Laodicea, Canon XXIX. It says, "CHRISTIANS must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ." That was in 363-364 A.D. They had been unable to persuade Christians to stop keeping the Sabbath, so they declared that if you kept the Sabbath you could not be saved (anathema). When that didn't work, they simply put to death any Christians found observing the Sabbath. The change was made because of anti-Semitism. Part 6 to follow.

How can you be sure Paul did not teach Believers to cast off the Sabbath? Read the end of the book of Acts. Acts 28:17-18 says, "17 And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, 18 who, when they had examined me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause for putting me to death." If Paul had taught the Believers to stop keeping Sabbath, then he lied when he said "I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers...." Was Paul a liar? God forbid. Part 7 to follow.

In the book of Acts, first Stephen was accused of teaching people to stop keeping the Torah. See Acts 6:11, "Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." " Notice they had to find people to lie. The text makes it clear these were false accusations. Again in Acts 21:20-21 we read, "20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; 21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. " It says all the Believers were zealous for the Torah, but they had heard that Paul taught against it. But again, the text makes it crystal clear that these are false baseless allegations, and Paul proves them to be false when he not only sacrifices in the Temple at the conclusion of his Nazarite vow, but pays for the animal sacrifices of others completing their Nazarite vows. And then in Chapter 28 states he has done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers as quoted in Part 6, above. Part 8 to follow.

So, if Paul taught the Believers to cast off the Sabbath and replace it with Sunday worship, then he is a liar. That would be bad enough, but if it is true, then what does that say about Yeshua? Yeshua said in Matthew 5:18, "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." That means that until the heavens and earth pass away in Revelation 21, not the smallest letter or piece of a letter would pass from the Torah. If whole commandments have been abolished, then Yeshua's prophecy failed. What does Deuteronomy 18:20-22 say about a prophets whose words do not come to pass? "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Is Yeshua a false prophet? God forbid. Part 9 to follow.

Does the Scripture teach that a man will arise who will try to change God's Torah? Yes. In Daniel 7:25 we learn that the false messiah would. "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law." Would Paul do what the false messiah was prophesied to do? Would Yeshua? God forbid. Part 10 to follow.

Finally, let's remember Peter's warning that Paul's writings were hard to understand, and that without a solid foundation one could misread Paul to one's own destruction. 2 Peter 3:14-16 says, "Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." Paul has simply been misunderstood.