

Foundation of the sermon

Purpose

Look at NT arguments used by some against the Sabbath

Principle Idea:

No NT Scriptural evidence for not observing the Sabbath

Type of Outline

Topical - based on Colossians 2, Galatians 4, Romans 14

I. Introduction

Last week we spent our worship hour looking at the basic foundation of Sabbath Theology and doctrine by looking at Genesis 2:1-3.

This week we will turn to the New Testament and look at a few passages used by some to say that the Sabbath is done away with under the New Testament dispensation. We will look at these passages carefully and find the sense of what the author or these passages was saying to the people he was saying them to. This is a good first step at proper interpretation of any Bible passage.

The author of these passages is the Apostle Paul one of the greatest theologians and Christian thinkers to have ever lived. Having said that the interpretation of Paul's writings of some writers and thinkers in this day and age are flawed because they failed to look at the context of some of his words in his epistles.

Our look at these passages will not be exhaustive, and I would certainly encourage everyone to read and study the epistles from which these passages from in depth and learn from Paul's wisdom and teaching.

II. Body

- A. Don't Let Any Man Judge You with regard to the Sabbath.
(Colossians 2:14, and 16)

¹⁴ Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

This group of verses form the basis of the argument that the Sabbath was part of law, and therefore it was against us, therefore it had to be "nailed to the cross." Further by reading these passages the thought of some is that "Judaizers" were troubling Gentile Christians with regard to keeping days, and food laws of the Old Testament.

1. The book of Colossians, and it's writer Paul are not dealing with the Old Testament law as evil or bad or not for our benefit.
 - a. Paul had a high regard for the commandments of God. For example he once said in Romans 7:12: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." and in verse 14 of the same passage said: Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Unfortunately we do not have the time today to discuss the doctrines of justification and sanctification today, which formed the basis for much of Paul's work of the book of Romans. In this passage Paul argue's that the law can not save you, in fact because of your sinful nature that you can not be saved by the law. However, for our purposes I want to show that the law was held in high regard by Paul. He was in no way arguing that the Sabbath command or any of the 10 commandments was bad, evil, or based in fleshly rituals. He indicates that the law is "Spiritual" and "good."

- b. Paul knew that some had distorted the teaching of the law, but their misuse of the law did not negate the "good" nature of the law itself but acted as a method of correction to those who broke the law as a way of life. He said in I Timothy 1:6-10:
 - c. "From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; 7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good, if

a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; " Note: the word translated "good" means: "beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable"

2. Blotting out of ordinances -- refers to ordinances that were "against us" -- hence it certainly does not refer to the commandments -- which are "good" if used lawfully. So what ordinances were against us:
 - a. As Seventh Day Baptists we draw a distinction between the commandments that were put inside the ark, and another set of laws called "the book of the law" that was put on the side of the ark. We find that this distinction is found in Deuteronomy 31:26 where it states: "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." These were alongside -- outside of the main portion of the ark, not in the ark itself where the 10 commandments are.
 - b. I would further - this personal speculation -- a view not held by other SDB theologians -- that the term "book of the law" does not represent all of the law but has more to do with the "blessings" and "cursings" that previous chapters of Deuteronomy has spoken of, and that Moses is commanded in this section to write down on a scroll -- which he calls here the "book of the law" and which all subsequent verses using this term refers to.
3. Therefore what Paul refers too in verse 14 is specifically speaking of laws related to the condemnation and punishments related to law breaking because we are sinners. The law itself is holy just and good -- we are sinners. It is clear that Paul is addressing these words to a Christian church made up of saved

people and he is pointing out that the punishment and cursings that applied to Israel for law breaking have been nailed to the cross. This verse is not applicable to the "Sabbath" since that command was inside the ark and not outside on the side of the ark, and was "against" them. The law by its nature was good. We by nature are sinners --

4. The error in Colossi was to ascetic practices rooted in "philosophy" mixed with the Jewish law. These practices that Paul is condemning are related directly to the Greek practice of "philosophy" in search of "wisdom." Look first at Colossians 2:8

- a. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Look next at Colossians 2:20-21 where it says:

- b. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

These ordinances have less to do with the laws of God than they do with the commandments of men. They are related to denying ones self of food, drink, and association with certain things to become more "holy." Luther found that the restrictive life of being a monk did not make him more holy. During his time The life of a monk was according to one web site I looked at "... hard, and consisted of fasting, prayer and work. A monk's day began at 3 am with the first hourly prayers." It was a life of asceticism. Asceticism was a practice advocated by pagan philosophers like Plato as a means to condition one's self so that "the soul-the sum total of ideals-could be free" It found its way into certain branches of Judaism through the Jewish philosopher Philo.

- c. Specifically verse 16 deals with ascetic practices advocated by false teachers who were indicating that the only way to true Christianity was to do certain things on these days. Not things that were commanded of

God but were specifically the commandments of men.

- d. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:
- e. Because of the plural state of the word Sabbath here it likely doesn't even refer to the Sabbath but the holy high days of the festivals ...

So Paul respected the law -- was not discussing the 10 commandments in verse 14 including the Sabbath, and in verse 16 the condemnation was for philosophically based ascetic practices the false teachers were advocating on certain days by mixing Judaism and Greek philosophy. In fact verse 16 may not even deal directly with "the Sabbath" but may have to do with the "sabbaths" associated with the festivals and specifically with the practices that had become associated with them.

B. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.
(Gal 4:10 KJV)

The reader of this passage should look at the nature of the observation of these days, months, times and years. The Greek here. It means to watch closely, and also to observe scrupulously. The main issue seems to be in this passage the meticulous nature of some in their zeal to keep these days. It is reminiscent of Christ's comment concerning the scribes and Pharisees concerning tithing. He said: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Mat 23:23 KJV)

The issue in Galatia is extreme legalism. It is not just the "keeping" of days but is this "scrupulously" observing, the meticulous nature of their observation that seems to be the issue. There is a hint in this passage of the ascetic practices like in Colossi. However the problem here is extreme legalism.

1. Another Gospel -- (Gal. 1:6, 7) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto

another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

The other gospel which was not really the gospel was one that some were teaching that proposed that one's justification and righteousness came from their own works, not by grace through Christ. in Galatians 2:16 Paul says: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Righteousness comes by faith (Gal. 5:5) "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." The law even though it is "good" and "righteous" does not and cannot produce righteousness in the believer. Galatians 3:21 says: "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Paul knew that even though the law was good and not against the promises of God also knew that it was insufficient to provide justification and righteousness.

Again the issue here is not the law itself - nor the days themselves it is the replacement of Christ as the source of salvation, justification and righteousness that this "non-gospel" provided by "works."

2. Paul did not have an issue with days in and of and by themselves

- a. Acts 17:2 "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures," (with Jews)
- b. Acts 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. (with Gentiles)
- c. 1 Corinthians 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (other festivals)
- d. Acts 18:21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed

from Ephesus. (other festivals- note temple still standing)

- C. Can I replace the seventh day as the Sabbath??? Romans 14:5 "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."
1. Note carefully that the Sabbath day is not mentioned specifically in this passage.
 2. The context of the passage is whether to eat or not eat certain things Romans 14:1 and Romans 14:6
- Romans 14:1 "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs."
- Romans 14:6 "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."

The issue in Romans 14:5 is certain days in which some were celebrating a particular day by fasting or feasting. The esteeming of a day by their eating practices on that day. The Jews of this time often fasted on a particular day of the week. These days were of significance to them concerning their personal relationship with God. The issue is imposing personal preferences on others. There is no indication that the issue is the Sabbath command in this passage.

III. Conclusion

Today we have completed a limited study of the Sabbath day in the Scripture. It was a very limited study. Last week we concentrated on the basis for Sabbath worship by looking at Genesis 2. This week we have concentrated on passages in the New Testament used by some to say that the Sabbath was done away with.

We discovered that the issues in these passages in the New Testament related to the issues raised by false teachers in particular churches during the New Testament period.

These issues were related to particular problems these false teachings posed. In Colossi the issue was ascetic practices

associated with certain days to increase their spirituality. In Galatia the issue was related to meticulous observation of certain days as a means to get righteousness. In the Church in Rome the issue was once again the eating of certain foods, related to asceticism, on certain days.

These passages do not focus on the viability of the Sabbath or other religious festivals themselves but deal with the method of and purpose the observance of these days by some. These passages are not a condemnation of the Sabbath in any way.

These problems exist today in churches and therefore Paul's writings are valid. Some might have replaced these days with other days -- but their practices that Paul found as offensive and dangerous have not. Some still would practice asceticism in an attempt at spirituality. Some would meticulously observe certain days in a legalistic manner in an attempt to gain righteousness and justification. Some would still practice vegetarianism thinking it is a more spiritual lifestyle.

As valuable as these passages are, they are not directly related to the Sabbath as a commandment of God, and they are not a judgment against the law of God when it is used lawfully.

As I mentioned this is not an exhaustive study of the Sabbath nor a study of "first day of the week" passages in the New Testament or in the Scripture in general. If you wish to pursue the topic further please review the paper I wrote concerning the Sabbath for Summer Institute a few years ago. You may find this on our church web site under the "papers" menu item.

Title: Paul and the Sabbath.